THE WORK OF THOMAS W. NASON

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THE WORK OF THOMAS W. NASON

BY FRANCIS ADAMS COMSTOCK AND WILLIAM DOLAN FLETCHER

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Recording the intense personal vision of an artist who worked in miniature in the mediums of the wood engraving and line engraving on copper, *The Work of Thomas W. Nason* considers Nason's life, philosophy and skills, and examines the pictures which he made during more than forty years as a practicing artist. In Boston in the Nineteen Twenties, Nason found his calling, and his art reached maturity and a time of great productivity in the Thirties. There are many dimensions to his work, including a wide range of commissions in the realm of the art of the book. His prints express the essence of New England landscape and village, yet they are not confined by locality; they belong in a great tradition of the poetic expression of landscape in prints. Essays by Walter Muir Whitehill, Francis Adams Comstock and William Dolan Fletcher, and an earlier essay written by John Taylor Arms and here reprinted, contribute toward a full description and understanding of Nason's art. There is commentary by writers past and present, including Dorothy Adlow, Charles D. Childs, Norman Dodge, Arthur Heintzelman, Stephen Lee Renwick and Carl Zigrosser. A selection from the correspondence between David McCord and Thomas Nason gives intimate glimpses of the artist at work. Paul Swenson surveys Nason's printmaking career in a selection of fifty prints with commentary. The artist's voice can be heard frequently throughout this book, for there are excerpts from conversations and letters

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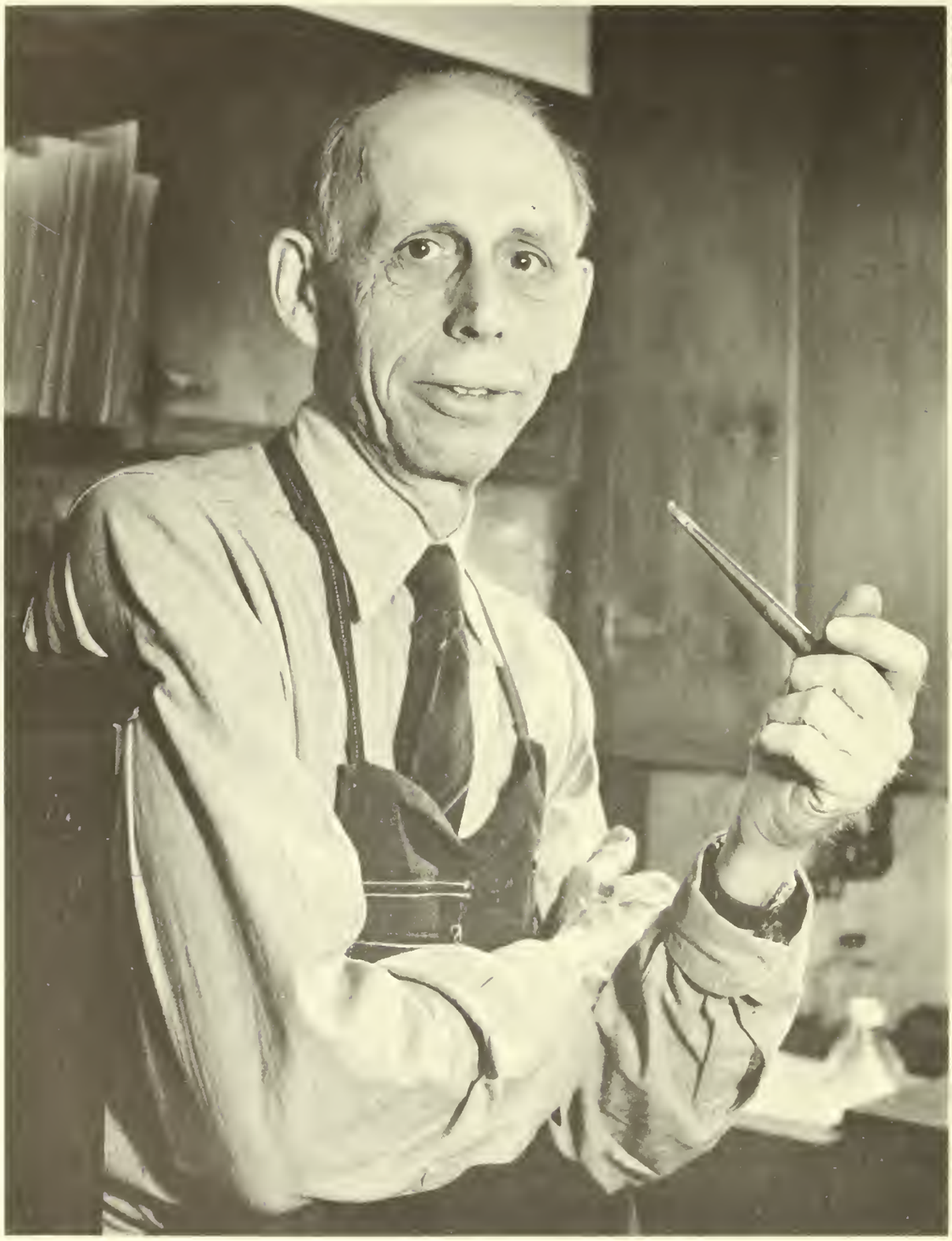
THE WORK OF THOMAS W. NASON, N.A.



Thomas W. Nason (1889–1971)

THE WORK OF

THOMAS W. NASON, N.A.

BY FRANCIS ADAMS COMSTOCK AND WILLIAM D. FLETCHER

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY BY WALTER MUIR WHITEHILL

FOREWORD BY PHILIP J. McNIFF

Edited by Sinclair H. Hitchings, with commentaries on prints
by Paul Swenson, Nason's own essay on the history and practice of wood engraving,
and a reprinting of John Taylor Arms' essay on Nason's prints

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FOREWORD

THOMAS NASON used the resources of the Boston Public Library for the development of his artistic abilities and it was most appropriate that the friendship of Arthur Heintzelman, Keeper of Prints, and Mr. Nason led to a major exhibition in 1946. The Library's long-standing interest in the work of Thomas Nason has resulted in a comprehensive collection of his works as well as the publication of this definitive catalogue.

In 1966 Francis Comstock launched a project to produce a companion volume to his *A Gothic Vision: The Work of F. L. Griggs*. The unpublished Comstock catalogue of 1968 contained some 496 entries. A substantial number of additional Nason works were subsequently acquired with the help of Mrs. Nason and William Fletcher, necessitating a revision of the catalogue. While this major editorial work was in progress a second major Nason exhibition was held at the Boston Public Library from January 19–March 21, 1976. The exhibition included the single-sheet prints, the art of the bookplate, Christmas cards, water colors and a recreation of the 1946 retrospective exhibition.

The Library is grateful to those who contributed essays for this catalogue and to the editor, Judith Gans, Lucia Blackwelder, Catherine Nicholson, and Eugene Zepp. We are also indebted to the friends of Thomas Nason who contributed funds towards this publication and to the members of the Nason family, especially Mrs. Margaret Nason, for their constant support and encouragement.

PHILIP J. MCNIFF
Director

Old Farm, pen and wash drawing, 7 × 11¼

Personal emblems and marks and two early self-portraits, all designed and engraved on wood by the artist. Identified by numbers in the catalogue of prints later in this volume, they are (left to right): top 37, 89; middle 136, 116, 56, 65; bottom 94, 81, 60, 67.

INTRODUCTION

DURING preparation of the complete illustrated survey of Thomas Nason's prints which is a part of this book, William Glick of The Meriden Gravure Company remarked that the prints constitute almost an encyclopedia of graphic design in miniature: not only landscapes and portraits in single-sheet wood engravings and copper engravings, but book illustrations as well; bookplates and Christmas cards engraved on wood and metal; many commissioned views of buildings; demonstration plates, trade cards, labels, and personal and corporate marks and emblems. More than a score of chiaroscuro wood engravings, poems in landscape, are in a special class and include some

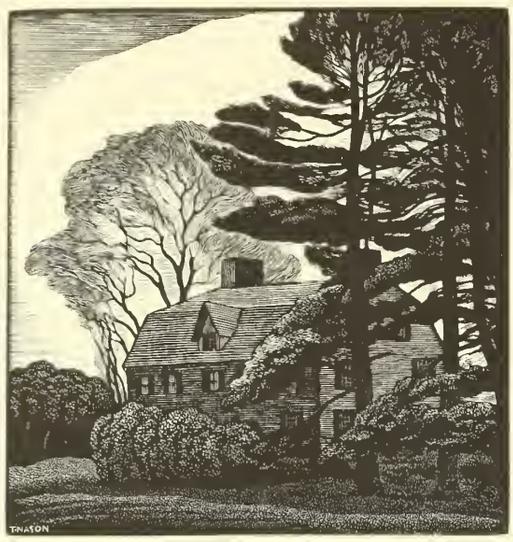
310 [Engraving a block]

of his finest achievements. There is no one way to look at Nason's art, for he began and ended his artistic career with drawings and paintings; he looked at landscape with a painter's eye, yet as a graphic artist he felt the fundamental, uncompromising power of black and white. He had the printmaker's love of the precise marks of sharp tools on wood and copper, the craftsman's gifts for working these surfaces. Carrying on a longstanding tradition, he loved the miniature as well, and made many cameo-like engravings which are perfection as parts of a whole, with type and margins, in the books he illustrated. On the walls at home, my wife and I have four tiny wood engravings by Nason illustrating *Walden*. Perfectly fitted for their purpose in the book, as it was designed and printed at Yale University by Carl Rollins for The Heritage Press, these little prints have great strength and poetry as separately framed pictures. We never grow tired of them. The tiniest, only slightly larger than my thumbnail, shows a solitary man walking through deep snow. The man is Thoreau, or one of his winter visitors, but he is any of us in his clumsy lifting of feet in the snow; the whites gouged out of the block by the artist take on the weight and feeling of snow on tree branches and ground in a miraculous way. Another wood engraving shows Thoreau's little house under the trees, another shows hilly banks reflected in the pond, while still another, again tiny even among the little prints, captures the roguish portrait of a roly-poly woodchuck. The woodchuck has a devious look, as if thinking thievish thoughts, and Nason has expressed this inherent character in miniature as one of the great Japanese painters of animals could capture the nature of fox or deer in the larger scale of a scroll.

In the pictorial survey of Nason's printmaking, his numerous wood engravings illustrating Frost's poems are reproduced, and several of the contributors of essays write of Nason and Frost. The end-of-the-century New England hinterland in which these men grew up is one of the keys to understanding what they became. Both were high school graduates at a time when high school rather than college or graduate school was the threshold to a literate life. Both grew up in a world of country and town quite different from the urban sophistication of Boston. Both embarked on a continuing adventure in self-education which took Nason around the world in 1910–1913 and Frost to England with his young family in 1912–1915. Frost went to some pains, in later years, to give credit where credit was due to his mother and her reading aloud. He came early to poetry. Nason, similarly, grew up in a bookish atmosphere; his grandfather, a minister and the author of the

231 *Thoreau's House*

family, had known Emerson and Whittier, and his father, also a minister, figured in a family story which pictured him reading Xenophon when he should have been tending the furnace. Nason was the only one of the men of his



131 *The Old Manse, Concord*

family who did not go to college. There were many households like the one in which he grew up, sheltering a pattern of life which was simple, compared to the clutter and hurry of today, and reflecting a scale of values which considered books to be important, as they always have been in New England. Hawthorne at the Old Manse and Thoreau at Walden are two symbols of that way of life in the nineteenth century. It is no accident that Nason felt completely at home with the commission to illustrate *Walden*.

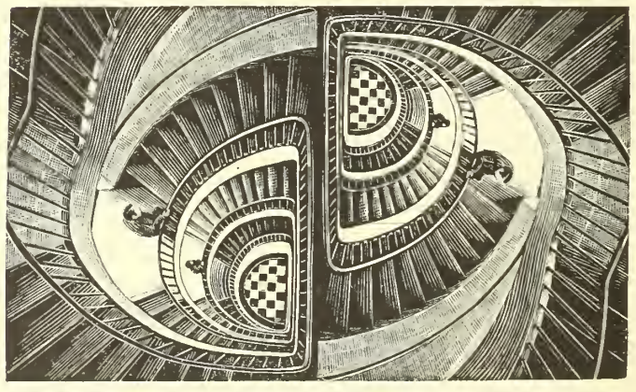
The element of conscious poetry in Nason's way of looking at life is expressed in his pictures but sometimes in words as well. The simple music of the titles of his prints summons a world of river, marsh, and orchard, of sky and weather. He once commented on his strong attraction to Lyme, Connecticut, and the lower Connecticut River valley in the Thirties, when the country was going to seed. Thirty years later, it was a country no longer of abandoned farms, decay, and loneliness. Instead, there were freshly painted white houses, garages, and new automobiles, and he had to look further for his inspiration. His art was meditative, sometimes brooding, often intuitive. "The woodcuts by Mr. Nason are impressive for a tranquillity, for a quality of repose and inwardness," wrote Dorothy Adlow in 1942, referring especially to his *Village Street*. "He discerns the permanent rather than the transient features. When he paints trees, they are trees of a universal character; houses are clearly delineated shelters, which are functional, not merely picturesque."

The word "paint" finds a place in her comments as it must for anyone who studies Nason's miniature art with its broad applications of the painter's vision coupled with tiny and meticulous manifestations of the craftsman's feeling for tools and materials. Sometime painter, master engraver through a long working life, student of the outdoors with pen, pencil and watercolor brush, Nason was always a bookman as well. He welcomed the intimacy, the focus, the compression of the book page. Its scale is the scale of his printmaking. From the first years of his emerging career as an engraver, he designed and engraved bookplates. The appearance of some of his woodcuts and wood engravings in *The Century*, November, 1923, is another early expression of his deep-seated sense of his own share in the world of type and illustration; so is his advertisement of 1925 which contains a made-up title page with a vignette of his design. Momentarily filling the role of typographer, he used type on other occasions, and sometimes he engraved letters of his own shaping as part of bookplates or emblems. The present volume reveals the abundance of his book illustration, and behind that abundance his abiding love of the art of the book.

In the summer and fall of 1975, the Boston Public Library held an exhibition of books, pictures, and artifacts belonging to the poet David McCord. The McCord collection includes numerous Nason engravings on wood and copper, a testimony not only to friendship but to the discernment of a collector of limited budget. One of the first prints acquired by the poet was *Clam Digger's Shack*, here

Clam Digger's Shack (No. 57) and
House on the Marsh (No. 75)

reproduced in two versions to show Nason's continued thinking about a design and different ways to present it. Other examples can be found later in this volume – Nason's reconsideration, for instance, of *New England Fields* (1940).



"Double exposure" of *Littauer Center Staircase* (No. 450)

Evening Mist (No. 335)

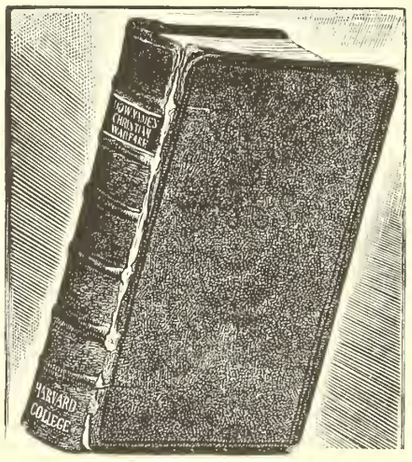
To several of his friends, including David McCord, Nason sent a visual joke which had its origins in his restlessness in reaching for new designs and subjects. One of the Harvard series of wood engravings commissioned by the poet on behalf of the Harvard Fund, the original print is an unconventional perspective looking down a stairwell in a new Harvard building. Nason printed the block on tissue, then turned it around and printed a second impression beside the first. "The double 'exposure' of the stairway at Harvard I'm including simply for yourself," he wrote with one of the proofs. "Thought you might get a laugh out of my abstraction."

To David McCord, too, Nason inscribed a "*tour de force*." It is a wood engraving picturing the only book which has survived from John Harvard's library. The illusion of the old folio volume, in miniature, is uncanny, and the technical virtuosity and sympathetic perception embodied in the print more than justify the artist's comment.

There is an element of revelation when the artist is working at this peak of mastery and inspiration. Three other prints, each quite different but each, to me, a *tour de force*, give other clues to his outlook and his way of shaping his perceptions.

The first two might be presented as a pair. Each is a view looking down into a valley, and in each the qualities of atmosphere, of light, which clothe the hills, are a miracle of expression.

Evening Mist (1943) is possible only because the artist, in his mastery of both engraving and printing, forces the wood block to yield the richest of blacks. With total command of his tools, he uses dotting or stippling with the point of the burin, and combines it at times with cross-hatching to produce a spectrum of light tones, all measured against the great dark masses of trees at right center



John Harvard's Book (No. 436)

168 *Nude Half Figure*

481 *View of the Eight Mile River*

and in the middle distance at far left. Of necessity, he must be his own printer, and he uses the most careful make-ready, a fine ink, and as his paper a receptive Japanese tissue, almost buff in color. It is hard to make patterns of lines, like the horizontal parallels indicating the water of the river, genuinely convey the feeling of what they are meant to represent. Here, dazzling technique succeeds because it is inseparable from the artist's poetic reach into the character, structure and feeling of the scene.

View of the Eight Mile River, Lyme, Connecticut (1950) conveys a sense of atmosphere that is luminous, silvery, with an intimation of distant haze and muted foreground light as on a sombre day. For this subject, Nason chose the softness of engraved line on a copper plate. The technique of the print is controlled and highly sophisticated.

There are many Nason prints which could be considered, each one, as a *tour de force*. A last example is a tiny copperplate, *The Little Valley* (1935), which like the others is here reproduced actual size. Closely examined, under a magnifying glass if necessary, it shows an extraordinary range of technique on copper – dotting, rhythmical parallel lines, crosshatching of various kinds, across the full range of density of color from white to black. Nason himself on occasion referred to several of his prints as laboratory experiments, and *The Little Valley* might be considered one, as well. It is also an application of contemporary techniques seen in the work of the Parisian printmaker Laboureur, several of whose prints were part of Nason's personal collection.

Americans claim, as part of their native inheritance of art, the testy individualism of Winslow Homer and the easy worldliness of John Singer Sargent. Both artists, one by his choice working at home, the other international in habits of living, could find their way to universals. Nason is in the continuing tradition of Homer and others before and since. For so many of these American artists, one long look at the overseas world was enough; then they came back to live their way deeper into the meaning of their home country. To see the artist in this tradition does not prevent an awareness of his distant horizons. The suggestion of Picasso in Nason's *Nude* of 1934 is one of many examples. In his own printmaking he tested many ways of looking.

There is no infallible way to cast the net and gather a comprehensive record of the intense personal life of an artist, but this book can at least affirm the multiplicity, diversity, productivity, unceasing inquiry, and above all, mastery, of one energy, one mind, one spirit in the visual arts.

SINCLAIR H. HITCHINGS

183 *The Little Valley*

The Trumpeting Angel, watercolor, 8 × 12¾. See No. 153, p. 82.

THE EVOLUTION OF A PRINTMAKER

BY WALTER MUIR WHITEHILL

LESS than fifteen years and miles separated the times of birth and boyhood homes in northeastern Massachusetts of two New England poets of the first order. Robert Frost was born in San Francisco in 1875 but grew up in Lawrence; Thomas Willoughby Nason at Dracut on 7 January 1889. Later in life they became friends, for they shared the same vision of New England, though one conveyed it through words and the other by lines engraved upon wood or copper. Everyone knew that Frost was a poet, but the print curator Carl Zigrosser was entirely accurate when, thirty years ago, he characterized Nason as "a pastoral poet on wood", who "seems to say with Meredith:

> No disenchantment follows here,
> For nature's inspiration moves
> The dream which she herself fulfills;
> And he whose heart, like valley warmth,
> Steams up with joy at scenes like this
> Shall never be forlorn."

It was indeed this phrase, "a pastoral poet on wood" that Clare Leighton chose as the title for her tribute to Nason at the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1971 a few weeks after his death at the age of eighty-two.

Nason's father, William Walton Nason, a clergyman with a literary gift, was the son of the Reverend Elias Nason (1811–1887), author of some thirty-nine books and pamphlets, who had in 1865 bought a farm in North Billerica, where he made his home until his death. When Elias Nason died, his son William, although keeping his parish in Dracut, moved his family to the North Billerica farm. Consequently Tom Nason and his three sisters and his brother grew up in an unspoiled New England countryside. He recalled more than seventy years later:

> Our place, a farm of some fifty acres, was surrounded by woods and other farms, and through my school years I spent much of my time after school and when not helping with the chores, etc. tramping the woods and hunting and fishing in season – and as a matter of fact I don't seem to have changed much in that respect. There was a general scarcity of money and if we needed something it generally had to be home-made. I am still at it; furniture and what-not. As to the childhood period, I wouldn't say there were any definite artistic influences other than the literary and musical inheritance which seemed to be uppermost among my father's generation. My mother (Kate Julia Hooker) was from upstate New York where her father carried on a hardware business. I don't know much about her family but doubt if there was any artistic tradition there. They were, I suspect, a more practical lot of Yankees.

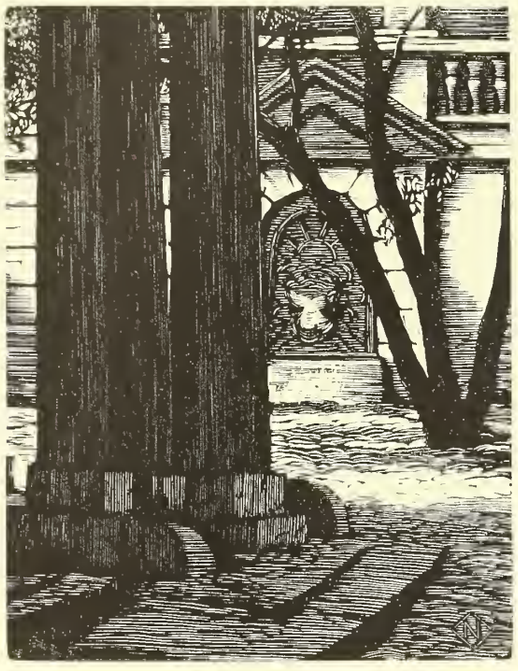
Tom Nason attended the primary and grammar schools in North Billerica, a mile away from the family farm, before going on to four years in the Howe High School in Billerica Center. His graduation in 1906 marked the end of his formal education. All five of the Nason children were fond of drawing. Two of the sisters eventually went on to art school in Boston. A little black notebook containing Tom's earliest sketches, done between the ages of five and ten, has survived, yet his particular delight, as has been noted, was "tramping the woods and hunting and fishing in season." His brother, he recalled,

> was more inclined to athletic sports, football and baseball. He was the one considered most likely to succeed in life. My pursuits above mentioned, though not frowned on by my parents, were hardly constructive except insofar as they contributed a bit to the table, game being plentiful in those days. I was really left to my own devices and subsequent career.

After leaving high school Tom Nason went to work, at $5.00 a week, running the paper cutter and sweeping the floor for a company that made account books. While doing this, he went to business school at night. He moved on to the Standard Oil Tank Wagon Station in Cambridge, where he worked daily from 8 to 6; of this he only remembered clearly that "at the end of the day the girl from the Boston office would call up to give the addresses the tank wagon was to deliver kerosene to the next day." Having taken civil service examinations, he started clerical work at the Portsmouth Navy Yard in 1908, and in the winter of 1910–1911 was sent to the Philippine Islands where he was secretary to the Vice-Governor. He left Manila in the early summer of 1913, and returned home by way of England.

In the autumn of 1913 he got a job with the New England distributors of the Maxwell Motor Company, which was engaged in cut-throat competition with Ford. In 1914, through his knowledge of Spanish, Nason became private secretary to Albert C. Burrage, a Boston lawyer with extensive mining interests in the west and in South America. This was a far cry from the Billerica farm, for Burrage had built in 1899 at 314 Commonwealth Avenue, at the corner of Hereford Street, the only Boston version of the kind of Loire valley chateau that abounded in Fifth Avenue; he had as well a winter home in Redlands, California, and moved about extensively by private cars and yacht. Nason travelled with his employer, and thereby had occasion in Redlands to meet his future wife, Margaret Warren. During 1916–1917 Nason attended life classes in drawing

in Boston, which were the only formal instruction in art he ever had. He continued with Burrage intil 1917 when he enlisted in the Eighth Massachusetts Regiment, in which an uncle had been a captain during the Civil War, and the following September was sent to France. Returning to the United States at the end of April 1919, he married Margaret Warren on 10 May and resumed work with Burrage. On their wedding trip Tom took along a small sketch box "and made a few daubs in oil" which, he said, he supposed "could be called the beginning." After a summer in Cambridge, the Nasons moved to Boston, settling in River Street, at the foot of Beacon Hill one block west of Charles Street.



38 *Courtyard, Beacon Hill*

A newly married New Englander with limited funds and artistic inclinations could not have chosen a better spot to set up house with his bride than this *quartier Latin* that comprised the triangle between Charles and Beacon Streets and the Charles River. On the hill that rose to the east were the handsome blocks of red brick houses on Chestnut, Mount Vernon, Pinckney, West Cedar Streets and Louisburg Square. To the west the sun sparkled on the waters of the Charles River Basin, along which then ran a narrow green Esplanade, free of the motor traffic, that invited walkers and their dogs. The graceful Charles Street Meeting House, at the corner of Charles and Mount Vernon Streets, built in 1804 for Baptists from designs by Asher Benjamin, housed in the Twenties an African Methodist Episcopal congregation, while a block away, at the corner of Brimmer Street, was the Anglo-Catholic Church of the Advent, whose choir took to the streets on Christmas Eve to sing carols before the windows of candlelighted Beacon Hill houses. On great occasions changes were rung on the bells in the Advent tower, while groups of hand-bell ringers wandered over the hill. Anyone walking down Mount Vernon Street toward the river on Sunday noon would be treated successively to snatches of Gospel hymns energetically sung by the African Methodists, ragtime banged on a piano in the adjacent fire house, and a Gounod *Gloria in excelsis* from the Church of the Advent.

This little quarter, which linked Beacon Hill and the Back Bay, had been reclaimed from the river during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Originally Charles Street had been on the river bank, but here, as in so many parts of Boston, land had been created by extending shore lines. So River Street, running from Beacon to Mount Vernon a block west of Charles, came into being in the eighteen fifties, and Brimmer Street, another block west, in the following decade. In the same period Chestnut, Mount Vernon, and Pinckney Streets, which earlier had ended at Charles, were carried through to the river. Charles Street offered a mix of houses and shops; there one could buy fruit, flowers, fish and antiques, and find most of the small conveniences of daily life. Early Christians from the Church of the Advent who wished to remain for the 10:30 High Mass found a hygienically frugal Sunday breakfast at the New England Kitchen, a high-minded Charles Street restaurant whose food was seasoned by the best moral principles. West of Charles, Chestnut Street had been informally known as Horse Chestnut Street because of the proliferation of its stables.

With the creation of the Charles River Basin in 1909 the shores of the river became more elegant. Charles River Square, a pleasant U-shaped group of single houses designed by Frank A. Bourne, was built on the site of the coal and wood yard at Revere Street, while West Hill Place, designed by J. Randolph Coolidge, supplanted the neighboring gasometer. Similar elegant little red brick houses were built in lower Mount Vernon Street, and in Lime and Brimmer Streets. Stables in Chestnut Street were replaced or remodeled into shops and apartments. The region attracted architects; Henry Forbes Bigelow built himself a house at 142 Chestnut Street, William Stanley Parker one at 148 Mount Vernon Street, while Frank A. Bourne lived at 130 Mount Vernon, at the corner of River, in a romantic Tyrolese-tiled confection that had been created in 1878 for the painter Frank Hill Smith by remodelling a simple wooden frame house of the 1840s. The region proved equally congenial to skilled craftsmen. The silversmith George Christian Gebelein long had his shop at 79 Chestnut Street, while the tenants of a block of studios in Lime Street included the silversmith Samuel R. Woolley.

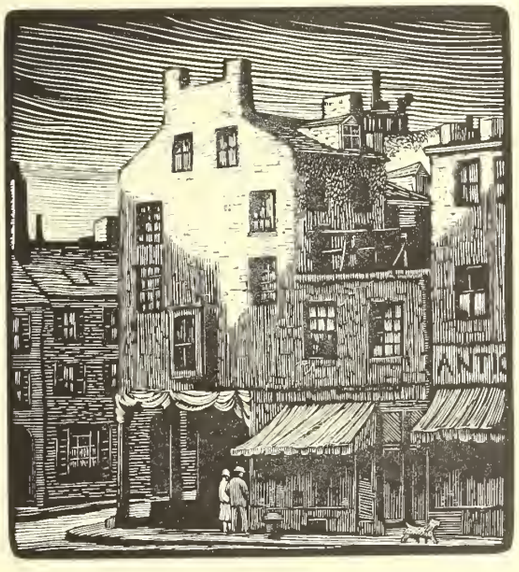
The Public Garden and Boston Common were near at hand. Through them it was only a few minutes walk in one direction to Copley Square and the Boston Public Library, or in the other to Park Street, which Nason walked through twice daily on his way to and from his office in the Ames Building in Court Street. The Society of Arts and Crafts had its headquarters at 9 Park Street, while Goodspeed's Book Shop was engagingly installed in the basement at 5A. At Goodspeed's there was not only a remarkable variety of books but a print department presided over by Louis Holman, assisted (after 1922) by Charles D. Childs. The bookshop was a frequent port of call for Nason, who later said of it: "Goodspeed's had a nice informal atmosphere.

They served tea in the afternoon. It was a homey sort of place. It was just the atmosphere for prints – an intimate atmosphere." As Louis Holman was a friendly and enthusiastic person who encouraged customers to linger, Nason used to spend his Saturday afternoons there. Lower down on Park Street was the bookshop of Smith and McCance, which delighted him because of the long counters with current issues of foreign magazines which might be examined at leisure.

Later in the Twenties both Goodspeed's and Smith-McCance moved to Ashburton Place to get more ample quarters. Nason's daily walks to and from his office then took him over Beacon Hill by way of Mt. Vernon Street and Ashburton Place. Looking back on these years Nason recalled: "Goodspeed's and the Boston Public Library and Smith-McCance – those were our haunts – and of course the Print Room of the Museum – that was quite an attraction."

It was in River Street that Nason began his self-education as an artist. Starting with oil paints, as his sisters Kathryn and Gertrude had before him, he began in 1921 to work on wood, as Francis Comstock tells in the essay that follows. He made friends with the wood engraver Percy Grassby, with whom he made various sketching trips. Although still working during normal business hours for Albert C. Burrage, Nason somehow found time to produce a number of woodcuts or engravings each year. The first time that he received any money for prints was in November 1923 when *The Century Magazine* reproduced six of his. Through Louis Holman's interest, he began to sell impressions of his work at Goodspeed's as early as 1924 or 1925. Within a very few years after his first experiments, wood engraving had become the absorbing interest of his life.

Although he never consciously set out to capture a public – indeed Nason's work and style were always his own – yet both collectors and dealers began to show interest in his prints. While he never had a single publisher, as many artists have had before and since, there were from the nineteen twenties through the forties some twenty different print shops which carried his work on consignment.



52 *Old Boston Houses*

> The older established print dealers, such as Keppel, [he recalled] were somewhat sceptical – at first – about admitting wood engravings into the category of fine prints and they were doubtful as to their saleability. Original wood engravings came as a relatively new form of creative art; the older generation knew them as reproductions of printings and drawings in magazines, but not as fine prints in their own right. Etchings were the real thing. But some of the newer print dealers were quite keen about them and I noticed that in exhibitions of mixed media the wood engravings attracted the buying public fully as much as any of them.
>
> Some of the dealers, particularly Mr. Torrington of the Kennedy Gallery, urged me to "make them larger." One may suppose he knew what would sell, but I always felt I was best when working on a small scale. I have never liked very large prints. Someone once wrote *it is better to be exquisite than to be ample*. If I haven't succeeded too well in the one, I have at least not been *ample*. To me Holbein's tiny cuts in the *Dance of Death* appeal far more than Dürer's large woodcuts, and I still have not seen anything that I can admire more than the little engravings on wood and copper of Edward Calvert.

A combination of unforeseen circumstances launched Nason on a fulltime career as a wood engraver. In 1928 to help a difficult family situation, he and his wife moved to Reading, Massachusetts. There they took over the house at 34 Spring Street where his invalid mother and youngest sister had been living. His father had died some years before. He had retired from his church many years before coming to live in Reading. As his work in the Burrage office had for some years seemed to him boring and unconstructive, after Albert C. Burrage died in 1931, Nason took the bold step of resigning and setting up as a freelance artist, in spite of the increasing severity of the depression that followed the 1929 stock market crash.

The move to Reading cut the Nasons almost completely off from the social contacts they had had in River Street; the solitariness was compensated for by no interruptions to continuous work. The one lasting friendship made in Reading was with Hamilton Foster, who had a deep interest in art. Percy Grassby, who would frequently write to inquire "What you got new?", continued to be stimulating and helpful. Life in Reading was not lavish or easy. In 1932 the Nasons' bank failed, and never paid up, but there was room behind the house for a marvelous vegetable garden whose produce helped the larder. "We managed to squeeze through; it was nip and tuck", but he kept engraving and the dealers who carried his prints all had a check for him every month. "It might not be much, but it was something. And there were quite a few dealers." Somehow annual visits to New York were managed to see the current exhibitions. And in March 1933, just after the bank closing, Nason had a one-man show in Boston at Goodspeed's Book Shop.

This was not a case of a Boston dealer giving early recognition to a neighbor from Reading, for Nason's prints had already been reproduced in *Fifty Prints of the Year* in

118 *Farm Buildings*

1926, 1927, 1931 and 1932. His *Willow Tree and Cottage* had in 1929 won the Mildred Boericke prize for the best print of the 205 shown in the third annual exhibition of block prints of the Print Club of Philadelphia; fifteen impressions of it were sold during the first three days of the show. The same print won second prize in 1930 in the first International Lithograph and Wood Engraving Exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago. In the same year Nason's *Farm Buildings* won the Mildred Boericke prize at the fourth annual of the Print Club of Philadelphia. In 1932 he received the purchase prize of the Northwest Printmakers, and in 1933 the City of Warsaw Prize and *Diplôme d'honneur* in the First International Exhibition of Wood Engravings at Warsaw, Poland. Nason's second one-man exhibition at Goodspeed's in December 1935 had been preceded by similar shows in October at the Dallas Art Museum and in November at the Carnegie Public Library in Fort Worth, Texas. By this year his work was represented in the permanent collections of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the New York Public Library, the Baltimore and Cleveland museums, the Library of Congress, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. This was good going for a self-educated New England countryman who had begun to teach himself his art only fourteen years earlier.

Although Nason began working in wood, which remained his favorite medium, he subsequently experimented with other techniques of printmaking. John Taylor Arms, who was long an encouraging friend, thus described one of these experiments:

> When Nason turned to the copper in 1933, he was master of his burin, and the new material seems to have presented no difficulties to him. I remember with what eagerness I awaited his first line-engraving, for one day in my studio he had picked up a copper plate and I had urged him to take it home and work upon it, so sure was I that he possessed those rare qualities essential to the true line-engraver. That belief has since been more than justified.

In November 1935 the exquisite delicacy of Nason's copper engraving, *The Farm Lane, Connecticut*, shown in the 20th Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Etchers in New York, so delighted Arms that he gave it the prize he normally presented to the best *etching* in this annual event. *The New York Times* on 26 November 1935 thus reported the award:

> In awarding this prize, the donor, Mr. Arms, president of the society, explained: "Although this prize has been given in past years only for etchings, it is purely a personal one and the donor reserves the right to give it outside the medium of the bitten line in the case of some other print of outstanding beauty. In the present exhibition the line engraving "The Farm Lane" is so unusual in the perfection of its technical quality as to merit, in the donor's opinion, the award."

In *The Print Collector's Quarterly* for April 1937, John Taylor Arms began an article on "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason" with these paragraphs:

> "*His execution is of that highest order which has no independent essence, but lingers and hesitates with the thought, and is lost and found in a bewilderment of intricate beauty.*"

So said the etcher poet, Samuel Palmer, about the work of that other great etcher poet, Claude Gellée. It is, I think, the most beautiful and touching thing I ever heard of one artist saying about another. Everyone who draws knows what he meant – the expression that does not obtrude itself upon the observer's attention, but holds back – subtle, almost shy, yet wholly eloquent; that seems to search and feel for its forms as it "lingers and hesitates" with the creator's thought; now revealing, now withholding; penetrating into the mystery of beauty, sounding its depth and, almost bewildered, offering the poet's interpretation of what he finds there. We sense it again and again throughout all art, this searching quality both of execution and conception. Sometimes the expression is positive and emphatic, sometimes almost tentative, but never blatant; yet always behind it lies the effort to reach into another and more beautiful world and to translate for us, in terms we may understand, the secrets that lie hidden there. It is in Claude's etchings, in Rembrandt's, in Ruysdael's, in Daubigny's, in Millet's, and predominantly in Meryon's; it is in Palmer's and Forain's, and in the etchings of McBey, Cameron, and Griggs; and it is in the work of many other masters in this and other media. Call it the spiritual, the romantic, the subjective – call it what you will, there it is, to be felt rather than seen, intangible yet wonderfully potent.

This quality abides, it is my earnest belief, in the work of the American engraver, Thomas W. Nason, and I would long ago have said about that work what Palmer said about Claude's, had I known how to say anything so fine.

Nason's work was not, however, something esoteric that could speak only to fellow-artists and the *cognoscenti*. It had a wide popular appeal, as evidenced by an incident in 1936 at the Fourth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Woodcuts at the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in

Kansas City, Missouri. There his wood engraving *Edge of the Pasture* received the first award, not by action of a jury but by the vote of the fifteen thousand visitors who came to the show. Nason had no interest in the artificial scarcities of small editions that were designed to create inflated prices. Indeed for a man who lived by his work there was a quixotic modesty about his prices. In commenting upon an exhibition of fifty of his prints at the Smithsonian Institution, the Washington *Sunday Star* of 8 January 1938 observed:

> It is an interesting fact that 14 of the prints on exhibition in the Smithsonian are marked "not for sale", because the editions have been exhausted. It is also worth noting that none of the prints is priced at more than $20, and some of them are as low as $6. This would seem to put these works of art within the means of those art lovers who cannot afford to make large investments and the fact that in this instance the best that is produced can be had for so little should go to show that it is not necessary to reduce standard in order to democratize art.

While details of other exhibitions and awards will be later in this volume, it should be noted that Thomas W. Nason was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1936, to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1940, and received his first academic degree in 1945, that of honorary Master of Arts of Tufts College. When he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1955, he characteristically responded to a request for a photograph for the files by engraving a self-portrait on copper and sending a proof to the Academy. (A proof also went in 1955 to the National Academy of Design, which in 1936 in response to its request for a portrait of its new member had received a portrait in oils painted by Nason's sister Gertrude.)

Despite these honors, Nason remained an unshakably modest and unassuming New Englander. When invited to speak to the Lowell Art Association at the opening of an exhibition of his work at Whistler House in Lowell, he wrote: "I could come up to Lowell some time later this month, but I have never given a talk. I am, I think, a rather slow worker, and it seems to me that I never have any too much time even to produce what I do, and in addition I do all my own printing and also handle the distribution, or publication of my prints. This keeps me at it all the time." Talking and appearing in public was out of his line, which was observing the New England countryside and making things, not only prints, but guns, furniture, gardens, or almost anything else that he happened to need. The manner in which he created the house in Lyme, Connecticut, where he and his wife spent the last thirty-three years of his life, being typical, is best told in his own words.

> In the summer of 1931, while visiting my sister Gertrude in Lyme and cruising about the countryside, we came upon an ancient house-site, the stone chimney standing in the center of the old foundations and the cellar hole overgrown with brush and a sizeable tree. We stopped, ate our lunch and explored the site and the adjacent land, at first probably out of curiosity but finally with an idea which grew, until later that autumn we made a second trip from Reading to Lyme with the definite purpose of looking into the possibility of acquiring the place. We found we might buy the house-site and whatever acreage we wished for a very small sum, the old stonework and chimney thrown in.
>
> The road was unpaved, rough, winding, and hilly. No electricity available. It was indeed back country. There was a well, however, with water in it, close to the original kitchen or where the kitchen had been. There were stone walls, a very run-down apple orchard and some open grass-land, elsewhere forest.
>
> The original house, we discovered, had been built about 1740. It had gotten into such disrepair, apparently early in this century, that the final owner had it taken down, leaving only the foundations and chimney stack.The story is that a cow or horse had wandered in and fallen through the floor and had to be shot, and as the land was used for pasture it was considered unsafe for animals. (After building the present house we discovered the skeleton of a horse nearby, with what appeared a bullet in the skull, so the story appears likely. I now have this relic hanging in the garage.)
>
> While we were there that autumn we got a local stone

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The house on Joshuatown Road, from a nineteenth-century photograph as reproduced in an early published collection of pictures of old New England houses.

mason to examine the chimney and foundations and as they appeared to be reasonably sound we decided to buy and the deal was concluded. There was no thought of doing anything immediately towards building; we merely intended to hold onto it until such time as we could manage it financially. The opportunity came seven years later and in the fall of 1938 we moved in.

Two years prior to this we had gotten local workmen to erect a small one-room cabin, part stone and timber, and in this we camped occasionally until the house was ready for occupancy. Meanwhile electricity had been brought in and the road had been paved. This was the beginning of the end of the truly primitive condition in the region. We were among the first invaders from the city.

The house was built around the old chimney, which had five fireplaces, and on the original stone foundations. The land sloped to the rear so that the basement was level with the ground on that side and this was where my workroom was laid out. Although materials and labor were relatively very cheap it took about all the money we could scrape up to complete the house; the grounds were very rough and had to wait until later, a gradual process through the following years. This was the culmination of a long-standing hope of owning our own bit of land and a house in the real country and we were, of course, thrilled with having finally realized it.

So in 1938 Tom and Margaret Nason left Reading for Lyme, Connecticut. By the time I saw the house in 1956 it looked as if it had always been there. It fitted perfectly into its setting, and had so much of the owner's hand-craftsmanship in every direction that one forgot that it had been built less than twenty years before. Nason's ground floor studio was a model of convenience and order. Benches, drawers, and racks of his own construction provided a place for everything. In earlier years he had even designed and built his own etching press. Having spent most of a winter wandering over back alleys in Boston to find or get made the various parts, he finally put the press together on a beautiful day in spring. Just as everything was in place and Tom and Margaret were clapping hands in delight, the radio in a neighbor's house blared forth "The Star Spangled Banner"! There was a Hoe Washington hand press for printing wood engravings. For walks in the woods guns were there, embellished with the engraved plates of their

The old chimney and foundations

The new house on the old foundations

maker: "T. W. NASON LYME CT". It was the ideal setting for an old-time New Englander who was tall, spare, shrewd, assured, reticent, good humored and imperturbable; a natural pipe-smoker and lover of dogs, who was as happy working at his craft indoors as he was gardening or tramping through the woods.

Although he had left Massachusetts, Tom Nason recreated in Connecticut the atmosphere of his North Billerica childhood. Some of the best countrybred New Englanders have been obstinately resistant to change. Having grown up in surroundings that required industry and self-reliance, on the principle of doing the best they could with what they had, they have been little affected by cities in which they may have found themselves. They have known what they wanted to do, and hell and high water could not shake them. Tom Nason left school at 17, and for fifteen years supported himself by employment that seemed to have little relation to his background or interests. At 32 he discovered his *métier*, although for another decade he continued in uncongenial employment before he cut loose from an assured livelihood to follow his star. Only a man of firm conviction, who would take major risks when he knew he was right, would have sacrificed a monthly pay check in 1931. Seven years later he was in Lyme, where he built his ideal world around him to his own specification.

A man so reticent and laconic is difficult to describe. In 1966, when he had sent Francis Comstock the biographical notes that are the chief source of this foreword, he wrote:

> It has come over me while writing this stuff that you now know more about TWN than anyone else in the world, except Margaret (who has read it all). When you come to think of it, how much does anyone know of the life history (or the dark past) of their closest friends? None of my family really knew much of my doings after I grew up and left home. The only one left now is my sister Kathryn and a lot of what I have written to you would be news to her.

What he thought worth recording, I have used, but it furnishes little clue to the means by which he made his way in the world as a young man. We are never likely to know how at 19 he moved from his office job at the Standard Oil Tank Wagon Station in Cambridge to clerical work at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, and at 21 to become secretary to the Vice-Governor of the Philippines. One simply has to accept the fact that he did these things, and was singularly unchanged by them. The revealing photographs taken in recent years in his studio at Lyme show a man who essentially might never have been out of North Billerica. Carl Zigrosser in his account of Nason in *The Artist in America* wrote in 1942:

> Thomas Nason is conservative in the best sense of the word. He has his feet solidly planted on the ground, and he sees no need of change just for the sake of change. He has a theory of personal culpability that possibly is a heritage of a minister father: "I can't help wondering if, after all, the ills of the world aren't really traceable to human weakness, greed, ambition, dishonesty, jealousy, and all such, and

The studio with copperplate press (left), guns in the wall rack, and Washington proof press at right (photographs on this page by Harold Orton-Jones)

> that no man-made system could ever be devised which would be proof against them." Meanwhile he has amply demonstrated that life can be ameliorated by art and good taste, and that a simple country life in Connecticut can be made a work of art in itself. He cherishes the good things of this world, and is no shallow connoisseur of wine, food, or tobacco. Always with dignity and restraint: there is nothing grasping or flamboyant in his nature. With true New England honesty he believes that no one can get something for nothing. He asks no favors or special privileges; he gives as much as he receives. Art and probity, thus, are part of his life passively and actively, in his surroundings and in his work.

Nason's subjects are predominantly of New England; only occasionally did he wander as far afield as Pennsylvania or New Jersey for inspiration, and then sometimes on commission. But he modelled his techniques upon the highest standards of European print making. Temperamentally he was the right man to illustrate Thoreau's *Walden* for the Heritage Press in 1939 and *The Poems of Robert Frost* for the Limited Editions Club in 1950.

Frost and Nason naturally understood each other. Clare Leighton in her tribute before the National Institute of Arts and Letters tells how the two men had come together at a party after a public lecture by Frost.

> Unbeknownst to either of them, or to the hosts, a technician making a film of Mr. Frost had inserted a microphone into a flower vase in an anteroom where the two New Englanders, Nason and Frost, were presumed quietly to be conversing. When the talk was recorded there were no profound philosophical thoughts in it. All it had to give to the world was a lengthy discussion between the two men as to the best way to prevent the raccoons from coming and eating their corn.

This has a familiar sound, for in late October 1956 Nason wrote me on returning to Lyme after a fortnight in Vermont:

> The deer had taken over during our absence; everything edible was gone – cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, turnip tops trimmed off, even celery. The only thing they didn't care for was the leeks, and Iceberg lettuce (I'm with them on that) and although they tried hard they couldn't get all the endive because I had covered it with chicken wire. They are still around but more wary and confine their activities to the night time.

In 1943, at the instigation of David McCord, long Secretary of the Harvard Fund Council, Nason began doing a number of wood engravings of Harvard scenes that were widely reproduced in various Harvard publications. Of some of these he printed a number of impressions; of others he pulled only a few proofs. Two years later he began a series of views for Phillips Academy, Andover. In subsequent years, in addition to his normal creation of prints, Nason executed various commissions for Princeton and Columbia Universities, for Plimoth Plantation, Old Sturbridge Village, and other organizations. Until his mid-seventies he worked without a break at the pace he had set for himself forty years earlier. Thereafter failing eyesight made it difficult for him to continue to engrave on the delicately minute scale that he had always preferred, and so he returned to painting in oil.

On the morning of 2 March 1971 he had gone to his studio to paint when he suffered a heart attack. He was taken to the New London Hospital where he died in the evening. As Clare Leighton points out,

> Characteristically, as he lay dying in the hospital, in his early eighties, his last words to his wife asked her to go back to his studio to clean the three paint brushes that, as he was rushed to the hospital, he had forgotten. To the very end he was the gentle artist, respectful of the tools of his trade, whether it were graver, printing press or paint brush.

Looking out the windows of the studio. At left, a small proof press; center, on the table, a sandbag to cushion a block while engraving; tools at right.

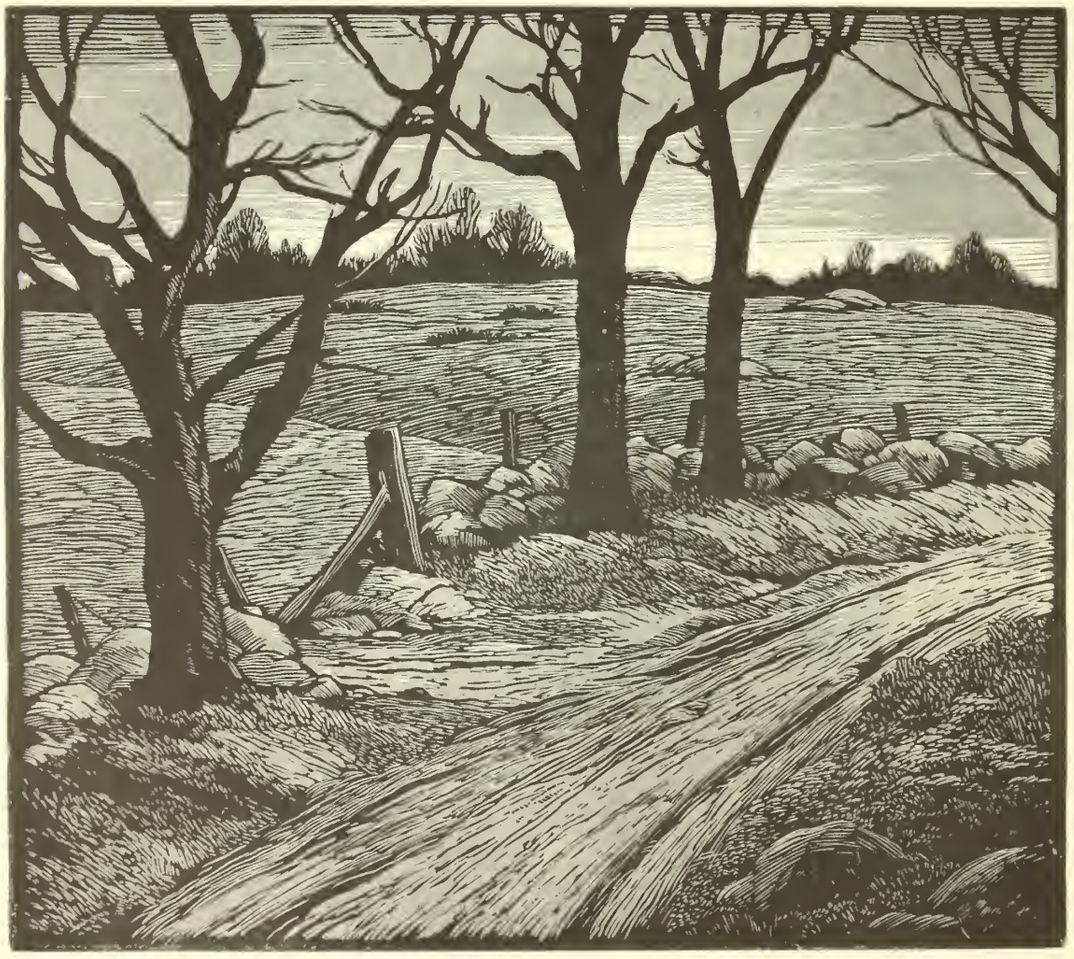
In speaking of the integrity of Tom Nason as an artist, Clare Leighton wrote:

> Most artists, today, feel that they have to fight for survival. A large part of their energy goes into this hunt for recognition. But this man dared to live quietly, in the remote countryside of Connecticut, ignoring the feverish demands of the New York market. With no desire for fame, but only the need to create slowly and gently, in the world of his own belonging, towards the end, however, he began to feel an unavoidable loneliness, as he realised that the golden age of the superb craftsmen in the graphic arts was passing. There is a sadness when an artist overlaps his era. Had

Tom Nason been able to look forward to the years and perhaps even to the many eras beyond him, he would have seen that the values to which he held will be enduring and of worth to the creative artists of the future. He would have known that he has mattered. Not perhaps, at this moment when paintings of soup cans are esteemed highly in the market, but in the longer distant view of time and history. There must be a continuity, beyond the fancy of passing fashion. It is a continuity from which we, today, nourish ourselves: and we ignore it and deny it at our peril.

This volume provides, for the future in which men will once again care more about perfection of craftsmanship than noisy self-expression, the record of the evolution and production of a great print-maker. Although I have seen a great deal of Thomas Nason's work, and live very happily with a number of his engravings constantly before me, I had no idea of the extent of his work until I first saw the catalogue that is here published. Such a record could only have been compiled during the artist's lifetime, with his benevolent assistance, by men like Francis Comstock, Sinclair Hitchings, and William Fletcher, who greatly admired him and what he did. It is sad that the book could not be published in his lifetime. It now appears through the assistance of a number of devoted friends. The proceeds from its sale will provide a Thomas W. Nason Memorial Fund in the Print Department of the Boston Public Library. I am proud to have been permitted to have a hand in the preparation of this record of an artist, who captured the poetry of the New England scene as timelessly on wood and copper as Robert Frost did in words.

10 *New England Farm*



77 *March Landscape*

THE WORK OF THOMAS W. NASON

BY FRANCIS ADAMS COMSTOCK

NASON has an affinity for wood. This may be traced back to his earliest days. He grew up in the country; there, if something was wanted or needed, it was made, with wood the ever-present material. He always made things, having cultivated, often through necessity, an urge to create and to work with his hands and his singularly acute eyes. He learned from his beginnings the immense value of craftsmanship which, joined with his poetic vision, has given his work its permanent value in American art. His observation of nature since childhood, while hunting and wandering in the woods, experiencing all weathers and skies, seeing old barns and farmhouses, gave him his vocabulary. In his prints we do not find fantasy, which is not his nature, but fact, and the poetry that only continuing observation can bring to a sensitive person. Frost evoked New England in poetry, Nason in pictures.

Wood engraving has not been his only medium. He began his career with experiments in woodcut. He has done a considerable amount of engraving on copper, and has made a few experimental etchings and drypoints. In recent years, he turned from printmaking to watercolor.

It was in 1921 that he made his first recorded prints, woodcuts made with a knife on plank-grain blocks. Almost immediately he began to experiment in the techniques of wood engraving. He writes:

> These first attempts were very crude, of course, but a lot of fun. I had seen some contemporary woodcuts at Goodspeed's Book Shop and other places and reproductions in magazines. These were not at all like the old reproductive wood engravings in technique; they were boldly handled, with solid black and white contrasts, and were original in conception. They fascinated me and I got hold of a few tools and wood blocks and in the Boston Public Library found a copy of *A Treatise on Wood Engraving* by Chatto and Jackson, published in London in 1838. I spent many hours studying this and other books on printmaking in various media. At that time I knew of no book dealing with modern wood engraving; they were to come later. Chatto & Jackson's book was for reproductive engravers but there was in it much valuable information.
>
> On the top floor of the River Street house there was a small room which served for a studio and I got a small hand job press and on this printed my earliest cuts. It could handle only very small blocks. My first published wood engraving, the little *New England Farm*, was completed and published on this small press in December 1922. As I began to enlarge the scale it became necessary to get an adequate press and eventually I found one, the old-style 'pull-over' proof press, and set it up in a back room of the house where my mother was then living in Reading, and I went out there to do my printing.

His roller, to ink his blocks, was the wooden handle from a package-carrier; his "engraving tools were procured from those left by old deceased wood engravers and the boxwood, Turkish, from an old shop in Broad Street, the Boston Boxwood Company, with old white-haired employees – a hangover from the old days of wood engraving."

Looking at this first published wood engraving, we find it very experimental, broad in style, with open spaces of black and white, quite "wood-cutty" in appearance, a simplification of design and pattern.

By 1923 Nason had proceeded from woodcuts to wood engravings. From then on he was primarily concerned with engraving; his work in this medium, broad as it was in the beginning, now gradually becomes more detailed. *The Old Orchard* shows the marks of the burin; already this is becoming a basic tool. *Faneuil Hall, Boston* shows the first crosshatching. If we compare the early woodcut of *The Deserted House* with a later version, a wood engraving, the latter shows a greater richness of color and more self-confidence. *North End, Boston* shows a "dot" technique appearing.

All through the year 1924 Nason continued his work in wood engraving, with one exception, a large experimental woodcut, *The Cove*. One engraving, *Rockport*, evinces a kinship to the work of Edward Gordon Craig, whose book, *Woodcuts and Some Words*, had just appeared.

Nason was already a competent professional printmaker. In 1923 he had sent a group of his woodcuts to *The Century Magazine*, had been asked to submit more, and sold a number which were reproduced in the November issue. He writes: "In 1923 I took some of these early engravings to Goodspeed's. Louis Holman was in charge of the print department and was very encouraging; he was enthusiastic over the apparent revival of original wood engraving and the first sale of my work was made there. By 1925 there were sales through the Weyhe Gallery in New York, the Philadelphia Print Club, and The Print Corner in Hingham, conducted by Mrs. Elizabeth Whitmore."

There is continuing development, greater subtlety and intricacy, in his work of the next few years, and for the first time he used chiaroscuro, a method of which he later became a master. This print is *March Landscape*, printed in black and brown from two blocks.

From 1927 on, virtually everything that he did was published, whether individual prints or book illustrations or commercial designs such as the mark made in that year for *The American Printer*. In his book illustrations and decorations he was showing great awareness of the problem of combining type and designs engraved on wood. His understanding was to come to fruition in his illustrations of the works of Frost, Thoreau, and William Cullen Bryant, as well as in many bookplates and a number of printers' and publishers' marks.

This year, 1927, marks his first book illustrations, engraved for *Dog Corner Papers* by William Whitman. We may note among the wood engravings made during the year *Autumn Foliage*, which shows just about everything that can be done with a burin, and *Winter Afternoon*, full of the atmosphere of a New England mill town.

Although his work was accomplished only in spare time left over from his regular office job in Boston, he had by now settled into the mood, the pattern, the character, which is at the heart of New England, as he is himself. Technically, he was now fully equipped. His work of 1930 and 1931 included *Lyme Farm*, a scene of one of the back corners of New England, and *Farm Buildings*, spare, lean, and strong, with a silo and rail fence against a completely bare white sky. It took courage to represent the sky in this way. He had found independence and a style of his own, as many artists do not.

The year 1931 brought a change for him. As he himself describes it:

> My work was now beginning to sell, adding encouragement to the idea, which had gradually taken hold, of devoting my entire time to it. There was little of constructive work in the Burrage office [where he had worked for many years] and I had become hardly more than a handyman and was very unhappy. But it would be a serious decision to make. I recall discussing it with Frank Weitenkampf of the N. Y. Public Library, and his advising me not to do it, didn't think I could make a go of it. So matters drifted on, and I continued to make wood engravings and to hold down my job such as it was. The decision, however, occurred by force of circumstance soon after the death of Mr. Burrage in 1931. I was no longer of use there. I resigned and came home to tell my wife that I was now a free lance. We were both elated though well aware of what might be ahead. It was not a favorable time to embark on a career of this uncertain kind. The depression was worsening and we had suffered financially and had very little money to start with – and less of that as time went on.

Beach Shack, of this year, was his second experiment in chiaroscuro, again in two blocks in black and brown. *Deserted Farm*, in character much like *Farm Buildings*, was a landmark in that he pulled 100 proofs, the largest edition by far that he had printed up to this time. Also in 1931 Nason made his first experiment in copper engraving. He writes,

> During these years I had become interested in copper engraving . . . I had seen some of the works of the contemporary English engravers and of course there were the Dürers, Schongauers, and others of that period. I studied many of these from time to time at the Museum of Fine Arts.
>
> I was familiar enough with the graver so that its use on the metal instead of wood presented no great problem, but I did at first have some difficulty in rendering in line what came naturally as masses on a wood block. There was a different approach to a given subject.
>
> I had sufficient time now to try a new medium and in the year 1933 my records show that copper engravings predominated, also in '34 and '35.
>
> The first necessity, in working on metal, was a suitable press, an etching press, in order that I might at least pull trial proofs. Some of the early plates were printed by a commercial printer but were not entirely satisfactory. Etching presses were costly and therefore I set about making one, the various parts being made locally according to my designs. It all went together nicely and has proved very satisfactory.
>
> There was much to learn about intaglio printing; I read Plowman, Lumsden, Strang, and others on the subject, and I had also seen how it was done at Percy Grassby's studio in Lexington.

Let us examine a few of these first copper engravings. *Hartwell Farm* shows a sureness in this new technique; *Finnegan's Hovel* also is very sure both in engraving and the wiping of the plate; and *Cummington Bridge* is remarkable for the daring – and successful – composition.

In 1934 we find Nason still experimenting, this time in drypoint: *Old Apple Trees* on copper, *Spring on the River* on zinc. Evidently he was not quite comfortable, expressively, in this medium, for he pursued it no further. Attention should be called to a wood engraving made at this time, *Summer Clouds*, an extremely powerful print with an amazing sky. Most engravers and etchers are chary of delineating any but the most delicate of skies, for they present formidable linear and atmospheric problems. To Nason such problems constitute a challenge which here he meets superbly.

The year 1935 was a "copper" year: nine of his fifteen prints were engravings on copper. However, to this writer, three wood engravings stand out more strongly, a trio in much the same mood – somber, very powerful, and astonishly rich in color: *Tranquillity*, *Landscape with Sheep*, the first of his chiaroscuros with three blocks, black, grey and olive, and *Edge of the Pasture*. In *Landscape with Sheep* he reached a high point in chiaroscuro effect: no one else had touched the possibilities that he found and took such poetic delight in.

417 *The Song of the Sower*

76 *Autumn Foliage*

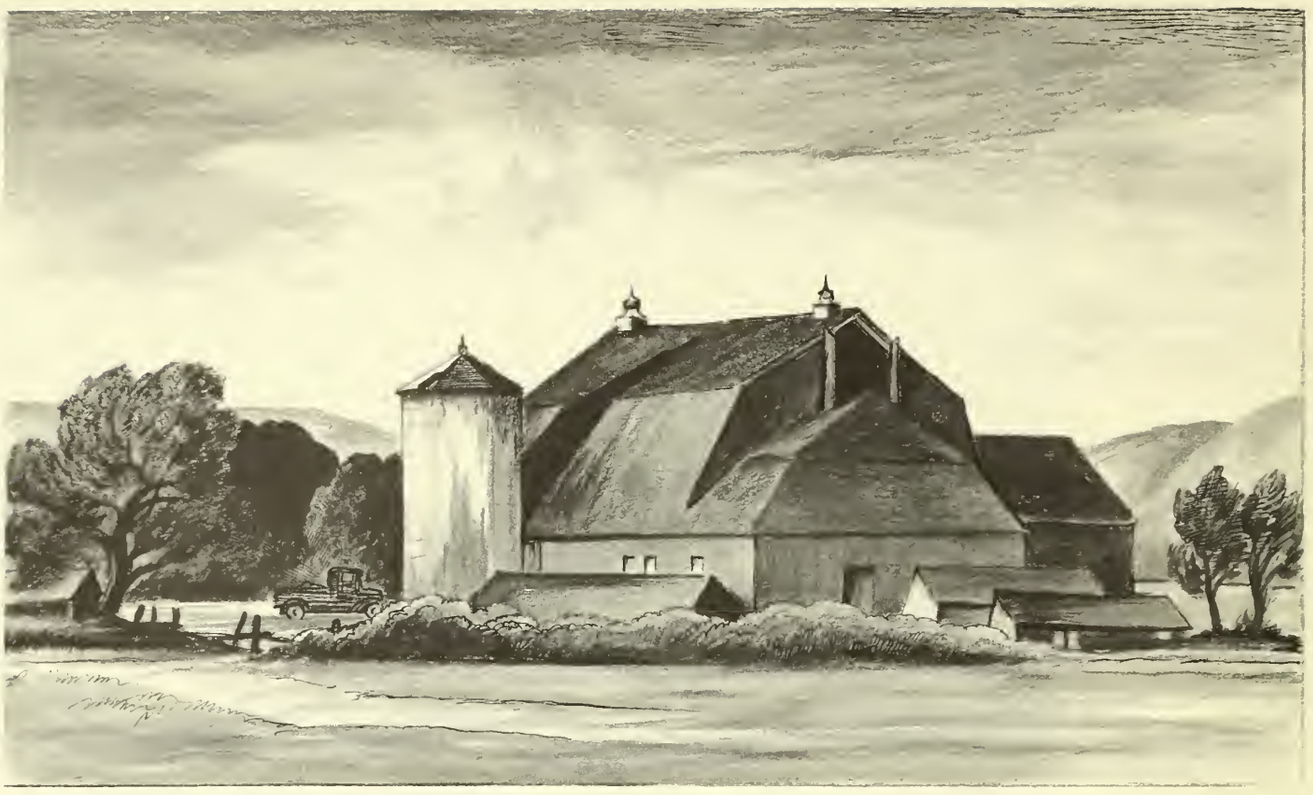
The next year marks his real beginning in a field he made peculiarly his own, book illustration. In this year he made six wood engravings for *Landscape with Figures* by Lionel Wiggam. His book illustrations show a sense of singular fitness for use in a book rather than as an independent "picture"; they have a scale that goes on the small book page. They complement the black of the type. They "fit". The vignettes are jewel-like and have freshness – an acorn, an open book, a branch, a fish; they are not pictures *per se*, but they are perfect in the setting of the book. A certain restraint and simplification is required for this. The forty-two *Walden* illustrations were done in 1938; earlier, in 1934, Nason made two decorations for a new edition of Robert Frost's book of poems, *A Boy's Will*, beginning an association that culminated in 1950 with eleven wood engravings for *The Poems of Robert Frost*. The meeting of Frost and Nason produced a perfect match, for never did a poet have an illustrator so exactly fitted to interpret him and to complement him in another medium.

In 1947, he had made twenty-six wood engravings for *The Poems of William Cullen Bryant*. The Bryant illustrations are more sophisticated than those for Thoreau, though not necessarily superior as book illustration. A remarkable little print is *The Song of the Sower*, showing wheat field and sky. In it there is an extraordinary effect of three-dimensional distance, and even in the small size, this is achieved with subtlety.

With little interruption Nason continued his course of printmaking from copper and wood. *Hebron Barns* and *Stone Barn, Bucks County*, both of 1938, show more of his moody, intense treatment of country scenes. *Shed and Horse* of 1940 is gentle in color but powerful in drawing and engraving; *March Thaw* of 1941, expressing winter wetness and watery sunlight, speaks with a sense of changing moods.

During the 1940's, of necessity, Nason took on many commissions. They occupied most of his time and left far too little for free creative activity. It is a great regret, for example, that he was able to accomplish so few chiaroscuro wood engravings, for all of these that he produced are very beautiful.

One of his commissions, in 1943, consisted of headpieces for *The Atlantic Monthly*. The pressure of deadlines irritated him, and he did not undertake this kind of commission again. Instead, he accepted opportunities to engrave views of private houses and schools, to make decorations and illustrations for books, to design and engrave bookplates, and to do an occasional mark or symbol. Among his patrons were Houghton Mifflin Company, Phillips Andover Academy, and Harvard University. Less in harmony with the pastoral spirit of his printmaking was the series of views he made, in the 1950's, for Columbia University. His own comment was that "technically they were satisfactory but limited in subject matter."



The Gambrel-Roofed Barn, pen, pencil and wash drawing. See p. 154.

Nason undertook many commissions because he needed the income and also because he could approach them in a spirit of craftsmanship. The assignments might be limiting in various ways, but book illustrations, bookplates, insignia, commissioned views and magazine vignettes could all be done well and made to fit their purpose as closely as possible. There is always a certain matter-of-factness which the craftsman has about his skills. Some commissions interfered with Nason's own search for subjects and meaning; others he seems greatly to have enjoyed.

Two prints which call for special mention, among those accomplished in 1944–45, are *The Cider Mill* and *Feeding the Chickens*. The first is a fairly large wood engraving in two-block chiaroscuro, black and olive. Like many other prints by Nason, it has a deeply-felt identification with New England life. *Feeding the Chickens* shows great variety of line in its representation of shingles, boarding and different leaves and grasses.

In 1946, because of his preparations for the Phillips Andover commission, Nason published only two prints. Of these *The Lonely Farm* is worthy of comment for its beauty as a New England idyll. And in the following year *The Gambrel-Roofed Barn* is one of the finest of all his prints. Nason wrote of it in 1948: "It is a two-block print. This is somewhat unique in that I used a copper plate for the tint, engraving it as if it were a wood block and also printing it in relief. I did this simply because it was easier to get copper than wood. It worked out all right in this case, but it was too difficult in many ways." Technical problems were always, to Nason, interesting and therefore to be surmounted; in this no printmaker has ever been more successful.

The next two years were almost entirely taken up with the Harvard series, and 1950 with *The Poems of Robert Frost*, but Nason found time to do a few independent scenes. Of these the wood engraving *Mountain Stream* is noteworthy. Nothing could be more difficult to picture convincingly than this rush of waters, yet the artist succeeds.

From now on, Nason's production drops off in quantity; we find only six wood engravings accomplished in 1951, three in 1952, and six in 1953. *Eight Mile River*, 1951, is, for him, quite unique in that it is a combination etching and engraving on copper. *River Scene* is another fine print, reminding one perhaps of a similar scene, with its group of noble trees, by F. L. Griggs. Except for the annual Christmas card, all the prints of 1952 and 1953 were in the series of small wood engravings of Columbia University.

In 1954 a temporary spurt in his output occurred, mostly because of the many prints made for Columbia. Two outstanding prints of this year are *Offshore Islands* and *Midsummer*. The first is an engraving on copper; it is a scene of stark contrasts on the Maine coast, with clouds and a sky reminiscent, curiously, of eighteenth-century paintings. The second, richly nostalgic and moody, just as unmistakably bears the stamp of Nason's style and perception. It shows a remote New England hill farm.

Five prints were made in 1955, one of them a self-portrait, his last copper engraving except for *Berkshire Farm* of 1966. In the following year we find two wood engravings, *Old Lyme Congregational Church* and *Parson Capen House*, fine "portraits" of buildings. 1957 shows seven wood engrav-

ings of which *Approaching Storm* is one of the finest he ever made. It is also one of the largest, 8″ x 11¾″. It is extremely rich in its values, and with an extraordinary sky.

1958 is devoted to the twenty-six illustrations for *You Come Too* by Robert Frost. These (in the opinion of the writer) mark the apex of his career as an illustrator. They are all vignettes, the happiest that he ever produced, all perfectly in character with, and attuned to, the poems.

Little work was done thereafter in the making of engravings. *Berkshire Farm*, completed in 1966, still carries Nason's magical touch in its mood and its technical perfection.

A word must be said concerning the bookplates and similar insignia that Nason completed from time to time during all these years. They show not only his usual craftsmanship but also the appreciation that he had for the happy wedding of lettering and picture. Within the limitations of the book page he shows an inventiveness and variety that is remarkable.

And, finally, his watercolors. If his production of engravings dropped off in recent years, he had been far from idle. He had taken up an old love, color. Unfortunately no record of the watercolors has been kept and, questioned, Nason replied, "I could not guess." But there must exist a hundred or more that he has sold or given away. For the most part they are New England scenes, the essence of New England, and as unmistakably the work of Nason. They are soberly painted with rather a dry brush, building up tones and masses, nothing unconsidered, nothing slapdash. They show him squarely in a great English tradition.

The list of engravings that I have singled out to comment on is only a sampling of the whole body of over six hundred prints; for each one there are a dozen more that could be described. A visit to the Print Department of the Boston Public Library, or to the Library of Congress or other institutions which have strong collections of Nason's work, is recommended to the enthusiast.

366 *Near Lyme, Sunset.* See p. 38.

THOMAS WILLOUGHBY NASON

BY WILLIAM DOLAN FLETCHER

ERIC GILL in his introduction to R. John Beedham's 1920 treatise *Wood Engraving* states:

> It is impossible of course to stem the tide of commercial degradation until Poverty, Chastity and Obedience take the place of Riches, Pleasure and '*Laissez-faire*' as personal and national ideas. Such a change of heart cannot occur merely as the result of economic or social or philosophical propaganda, the matter is more fundamental than that. The modern world is founded upon a denial of absolute values, a denial of religion, a denial of God; upon such denials nothing can be built. Goodness becomes what police will allow or can enforce. Beauty becomes what pleases the senses and Truth becomes what will pay.
>
> In the domain of art the remedy is the same as in any other. The thing good in itself must be found and loved. Relative values must give place to the absolute, the lovely and loveable to the beautiful. 'Does it pay?' is not the question. 'Is it good in itself?' – that is the important thing. And the more you apply that standard to your work and to that of others, the more you will find the necessity of personal responsibility.
>
> The workman (the artist) who draws, engraves and prints his own blocks is master of the situation . . .The first thing is that he should be free to satisfy his own conscience and not a mere tool in the hands of another. The freeman is responsible for himself – for the slave someone else is responsible . . . The workman is compelled to consider his work primarily as an engraving and only secondarily as a representation. This is a good thing for a work of art is primarily a thing of Beauty in itself and not a representation of something else however beautiful that other thing may be . . .
>
> *He must be prepared to start with the wood and the graver and his sense of what is beautiful in itself and not strain after effects.*

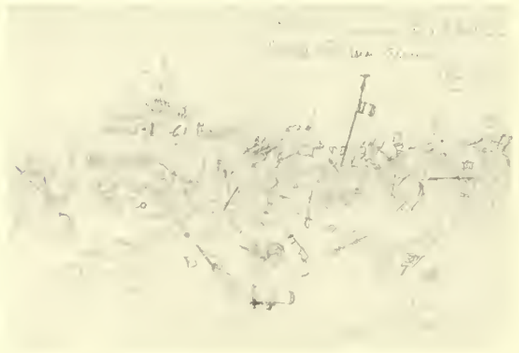
Although these words are long, they are important for they constitute the charter by which Thomas Willoughby Nason coursed his vision as a novice and they became the bible by which he lived as an artist and person. They were found underscored in this little book discovered among the art treatises of this Connecticut artist after his death. Without them Nason is an enigma; with them he is understood; by them he lived; in their fulfillment he died.

This artist of Lyme, Connecticut, who died in March, 1971, was a man seldom experienced these days, little appreciated except by those favored by his intimate presence. Upon first meeting him, his very mien and stature betrayed his person. He was tall, lean and wiry, reticent to the newcomer, impressive because of his eyes, brownest of brown, deep set, with a vision penetrating, even piercing, expressive of mood and temperament, analytic in shrewdness, critical in perception, assuring in manner. He was shy by nature, unassuming, quiet and reserved in speech, but none the less witty and dry in humor, possessing a whimsical smile and twitch at the mouth that belied the whole character and person of Tom Nason. A chance meeting with this artist would caution anyone alert that here was a man gentle in bearing, unswerving in purpose, direct to the point, but delightfully true and loyal to commitment. To those who would know him well he would be not much different; his manner more deliberate, his honesty the more evident, his friendship the more responsive, his inner self the more revealed, his worth the more cherished and prized.

Tom Nason was born in Massachusetts and for the balance of his eighty-two years New England would be his life and joy, his character and many-faceted personality. His forebears were men of religious commitment, people of knowledge and cultural pursuits, persons skilled in priorities and values. He assumed his heritage well and he spent himself true to its ideals and demands. Business and service to his country taught him dedication to duty and responsibility to others. Discipline early in life became part of his intrinsic being, and when he turned to engraving as his bent of the artistic expression he had already mastered the ingredients necessary for quality and success. It is said that he was self-taught, and yet it is equally

true that talent in artful expression was never missing from him. From the age of five onward his father, although unable psychologically to affirm or support such talent in his son, discerned it, recording Tom's advance and with full paternal pride silently watched progress until full potential was achieved. Tom began to draw and sketch and paint with line bold, expression definite, color co-ordinated, perspective accurate and his subject took the form of a frog, soldiers in battle, a fire-engine in operation. From this point of beginning to the apex of international stature as engraver and artist, Nason developed in a manner that bespeaks the genius of New England and suggests the whole American process of self-development.

The year 1921 witnessed his beginning as an artist, first the painter, then the engraver. Like his two sisters, Kathryn and Gertrude, before him he tried painting, a medium he was to revert to from time to time. His ability can be judged from a small oil he did of his wife on their honeymoon. He had married Margaret Warren in 1919 upon his return from France after the War, a decision that would make life idyllic for both, spending and sharing themselves totally for and with each other for fifty and more years. Again he tried oil in a small scene of a Boston street in a snow storm, but soon thereafter he turned to the wood block for its cutting and engraving. 1922 dates the first "official" edition. Boston would be the milieu for a small but exquisite set of prints, followed by New Hampshire with its pastoral overtones that enabled Nason to affirm life as he and his wife lived and experienced it.



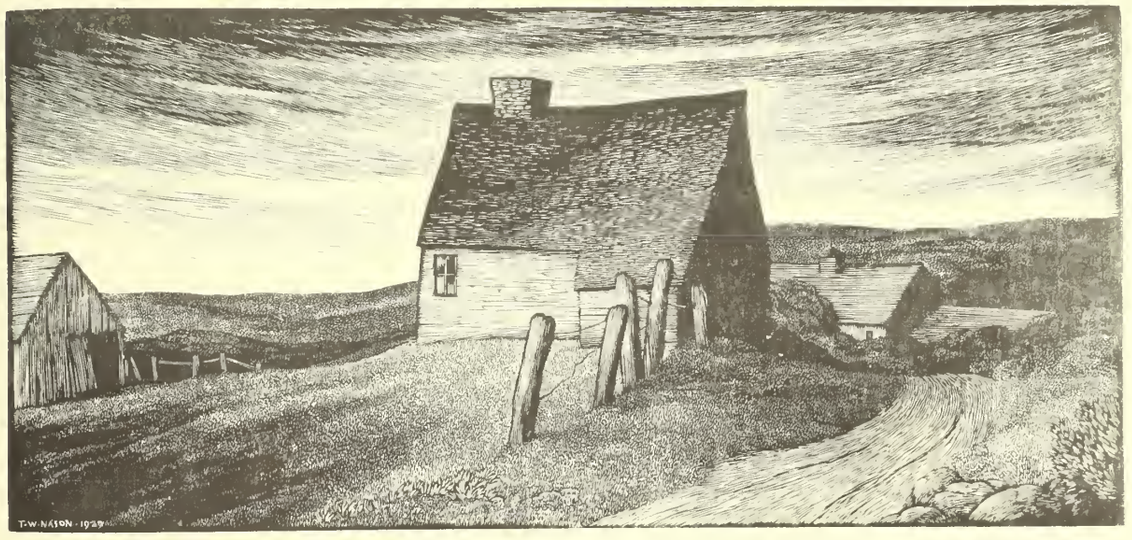
Whether it was the block of soft wood cut to the pattern of white birches, or a map of Deer Isle, printed by hand without press or professional tool or the block of lemon or boxwood or copper plate, Tom Nason was ever the total master of his work from design to final state of the print. His work is clear and positive, delicate yet practical, detailed but always subdued to the total expression of himself, honest, integral, never striving for effect or acclaim, receptive and appreciative if and when it came.

In the development of his work engraver he would ever be. In 1925 by his *In New Hampshire* he tasted his first success and this print augured well his long future of print making (1921–1971) with all the tangent facets of his artistic bent and passion finding outlet in the more than six hundred prints that would follow this one. It has been well said that every print is conceived of emotion and intellectual power and born in terms of beautiful and sensitive expression. The ability to feel deeply and poignantly was Nason's; sensitive he was, fused to a humility in the face of talent, coupled with honesty and unswerving allegiance to count time and labor nothing in his search for knowledge and skill. This future would contain all the elements of wonder: power in concept and design, scope of treatment both unique and personal, mastery of color, luminous and otherwise, sensitivity in line, intensity of mood, nuance of tone, soft or bold, quality ever to the exclusion of quantity, rhythm in expression, linear and elsewise. The result would be in the terms of Carl Zigrosser "charm and integrity."

1929 marks the passage from mere artist to poet of mood on block and plate, master of color, technician of craftsmanship. After a visit to his sister Gertrude's no place but Lyme would be home to him again, and he captured this in *Lyme Farm*. All the mystery of marsh and meadow, nature without and soul within fuse to fashion Nason's vision of what he perceived: Lyme as he would know it, Lyme as he would share it, Lyme as it would peacefully receive him in clay at death's finality. Here he would settle in 1938, although he dearly loved Boston and New Hampshire, Vermont and Deer Isle, and here he would spend the balance of his life, sharing and living in the orb of all-things simple and real, solitude and creativity, testing and celebrating one of America's great art centers. Here intellectually, emotionally, technically, artist and subject and material all fused and in it this one print contains the key to Tom Nason and his work. Others would certainly follow, but their greatness, singleness, import would but reflect the secretive power herein. Beauty is simplicity and never better has the artist caught this all-but-forgotten lesson. Beauty is everywhere but only the eye, the soul's window, catches, realises and experiences it.

1933 brought international recognition from Warsaw, Poland for the magic of *Back Country*, First Prize, *Diplôme d'Honneur*, one of the more than fifty prizes and honors he would glean from his labors, including a degree from Tufts College. It also signaled the serious venture into copper engraving and etching. Nason had tried this medium before in a still-life of his favorite objects: a pipe, matchbox and candlestick, followed by a version of *Sand Cliffs, Redondo, California*, in reduced size, years before, but *Road to the Sea* led the long list of plates that would form his copper prints, and proved that this switch to copper showed no obstacle, no difficulty for the professional Nason. What was long since assumed as technical perfection on wood soon became evident in the copper. Purity, clarity, austerity, simplicity, vigor joined with warmth and mood, poetic and otherwise – all these claimed their presence and the medium, copper or wood, mattered little.

In between the wood and the copper came the fascinating prints of the chiaroscuro, started in 1927 with *March Landscape*, a two-block print in black and brown, followed by *Connecticut Pastoral* and *Connecticut Landscape*, and cli-



113 *Lyme Farm*

291 *Summer Storm*

maxed by *Summer Storm*. If Tom Nason had never cut a block before or after, *Summer Storm* would long attest to his ability, his genius in concept and expression, his mastery of engraving. It is this print that causes Nason to be compared with Rembrandt and his *Three Trees*, one the mastery of wood, the other that of copper. Herein the beauty of nature, pastoral in eloquence, so intrinsic to New England, sings with the drama of a summer storm, sudden and awesome, evoking the depth of the poet's soul with all its aesthetic mood and power to share the grandeur of nature, never trite, always challenging, provoking. Hereby better than anywhere else beauty emanates from the sheer simplicity of the artist's process, the magic of his expression, the synthesis of life both in the man and his work. This *IS* Nason's greatest print, and it stands witness to his integrity in the standard of excellence and perfection he set for his work. After printing this three-block graphic he found that only three copies proved satisfactory. He destroyed the entire edition and began another printing anew, five hundred and forty prints pulled before final acceptance.

Nature, life would be his subject matter whether it was the flower so cultivated on Shippee Hill of Joshuatown Road, Lyme, jack-in-the-pulpit, hepatica, dogwood or yellow violet; farm buildings in leaning silos, gambrel-roofed barns or battered buildings; streams winding and beckoning angler and artist; trees: maple, elm, oak or apple; animals, a pet Gypsy or sleeping cat, grazing cattle, folded sheep or horses; even portraits such as a Morrill father and daughter, John Taylor Arms, or self-portrait; churches and houses aged with heritage or sole interest of the owner. And in between these favorite subjects came the commissions to illustrate the books of Lionel Wiggam, Robert Frost, Bryant's poems, Thoreau's *Walden*. College campus authorities would request series on Harvard, Phillips Academy and Columbia, while even publishers such as Houghton, Mifflin & Company and Atlantic Monthly would desire vignettes. Fifty-four bookplates would be sought and because of Robert Frost's appreciation and love for *The Fence Post* first used in *A Boy's Will* Tom Nason was invited by Joseph Blumenthal of the Spiral Press to illustrate five of the Frost Christmas Booklets, while the friends of Margaret and Tom Nason yearly awaited the Christmas cards that would come forth from the artist.

Then came 1966, the end of the artist's development and work in *Berkshire Farm*. Started in 1940 as a copper engraving this plate was worked and reworked until finally it passed the test of Nason's greatest critic, himself. His eyes were failing, an operation would not be successful, but nonetheless this plate needed completion and this he gave it. Like the classics before it, *The Hay Barn*, *Hebron Barns*, *Distant Shower* and *Offshore Islands*, to say nothing of *Factory Village* and his trademark sporting his childhood pets, the crow and chipmunk, this print witnesses Tom Nason's love for detail, perfection in line, expression in mood, portrayal of nature at its best, quality in its finest. It was the fitting close to a work so long in the making, to a lifetime of engraving that witnessed a commission from every print club in the United States, as well as a place of prominence in the print collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

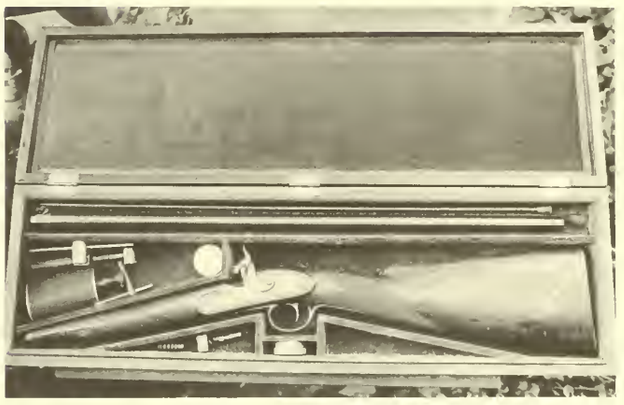
Whatever the cause or purpose of the engraving, the burin, native and natural to the temperament of the artist, exacting but productive of the inner self and its needs for

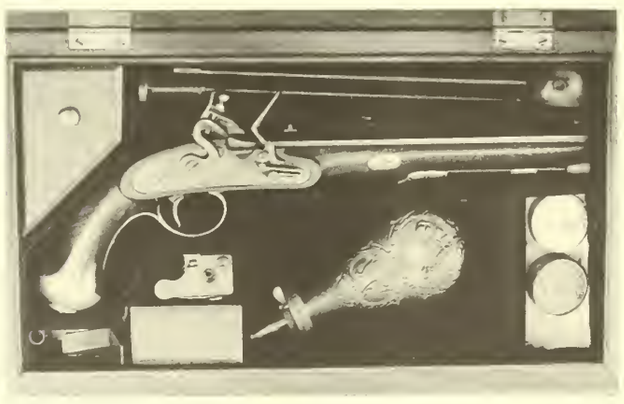
expression, cuts the line as the obedient servant, witnessing on wood or copper the mind and eye of the artist sharing with others the beauty of his own soul. Nason's was a talent to share, a person to help others, a man to befriend. Fellow artists would turn to him for advice, counsel, guidance. John Taylor Arms sought a treatise on the history and development of wood engraving from him and when it was finished he would reply "It was a delightfully bully article." Rockwell Kent asked for guidance in the solution of a problem of craftsmanship; Robert Nisbet came for direction and criticism of his wood engravings; Eugene Higgins asked for help in a problem of perspective, while Arthur Heintzelman pleaded for assistance and counsel in print demonstrations; Stow Wengenroth sought advice in a career just starting; Clare Leighton, a newcomer to the United States, sought practical advice, directives about wood blocks, paper and even a place to live; Alfred Fowler begged for assistance and cooperation in all things pertaining to graphics and their information and Carl Zigroser sought advice on the artist's role in multiple production and the American Artists Guild.

New England with its woods and fields, seasons and skies, shores and streams, moods and life, birds and butterflies, sings forth, and the alert artist, Thomas Willoughby Nason, with his deep abiding fervor and sensitivity, possessing the reserve, the modest, the humble tenacity and purposeful inflexibility, tempered by kindliness, patience, gentleness and brooding humanity, appears in all that he does. Whether it is a print, a gun (he was a gunsmith of the first quality), a chair for his studio (its finials being replicas of the Higgins' India Ink Bottle) or his home styled in the traditions of his ancestors, Nason was a man tolerant of all but himself, romantic with the lyricism of Palmer and Calvert, realistic to the chores and demands of daily routine, austere yet warm from the discipline that has been thoroughly his, aloof but intimate from the needs of creativity, humorously dry and terse, candid with delightful pointedness, prosaic to be practical, shy but responsive, mild-tempered except when integrity and skill are challenged by either the inexperienced or the unscrupulous.

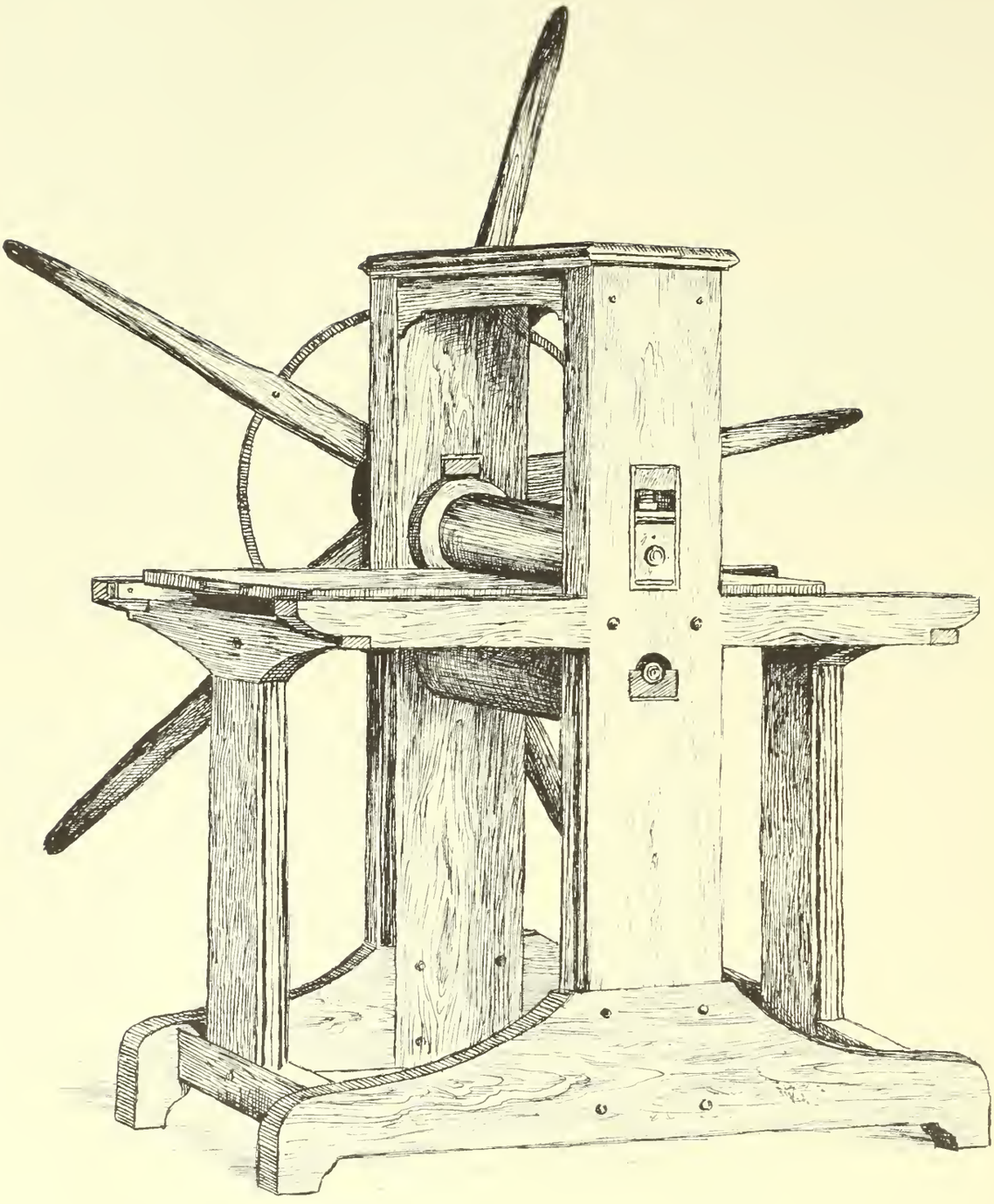
As Samuel Palmer put it in another reference "his execution is of that highest order which has no independent essence but lingers and hesitates with the thought, and is lost and found in a bewilderment of intricate beauty."

This was Thomas Willoughby Nason the man; this is the work of Tom Nason the artist. Integrity says it all.





The artist's engraving tools and two of his guns in the cases he made for them (photographs by Harold Orton-Jones)



Copperplate press, pen drawing, actual size.
The parts of the press here envisioned by the
artist were later built to his specifications,
and from them he assembled the press which can
be glimpsed in photographs of his studio.

THE
COMPLETE WOOD ENGRAVINGS
AND COPPER ENGRAVINGS
1921–1966

Near Lyme, Sunset, pen and wash drawing, 7 × 9¾

A GUIDE TO THE PRINTS

BY SINCLAIR H. HITCHINGS

A FULLY ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE of the prints of Thomas W. Nason is the result of years of work by three successive compilers and editors, Francis Comstock, William Fletcher, and Sinclair Hitchings. Between them, they have sought a catalogue which can serve the collector, the dealer and the curator, and which may also contribute to the history of bookmaking and book illustration, the visual record and interpretation of American life, and the long history of the expression of landscape in miniature in the work of printmakers during the past four hundred years.

The catalogue entries are confined to title, medium, date, measurements, and edition. Additional information on printing and publishing, the settings of the prints, and prizes and reproductions, is listed in separate appendices.

The catalogue is based on repeated examination of the prints themselves, of Nason's own records, and of an abundance of dealer's listings, exhibition records and critical commentary. These various sources of information do not always agree, and contradictions and disparities have been resolved to the best of the editors' abilities. The actual prints do not answer all questions, but remain the essential and indispensable source of information.

The published listing of 55 prints in the Library of Congress, and handlists made in the course of examination of prints by Nason in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York Public Library, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, have been helpful as supplements and comparisons to prints in the collections of the Boston Public Library. In the New York Public Library, Frank Weitenkampf's file of clippings, dealer's listings, and other published references to Nason has been carefully examined and notes made on each item. Xerox copies were made of two listings which are particularly helpful references: *Exhibition and Sale, Woodcuts & Line Engravings by Thomas W. Nason, Goodspeed's, 7 Ashburton Place, Boston, December 2d to 31st, 1935,* and the more detailed entries in *Exhibition of Prints by Thomas W. Nason, A. N. A. March 3d to 31st, 1937, Grand Central Art Galleries, 15 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York.* In addition, the great chronological sequence of Nason's prints in the Boston Public Library has been checked repeatedly, print by print, and notes have been made on the artist's practices in signing prints and inscribing titles and editions, as well as on other details, including papers used in printing and Nason's notations on inks and printing in the margins of working proofs. Detailed notes on prints were also made at the Meriden Gravure Company during several days in the summer of 1972. At that time, about 200 prints from the collections of Mrs. Nason and William Fletcher were at Meriden to be photographed. There were a number of sets of working proofs and other rarities. The Boston Public Library's file of correspondence with the artist has frequently been helpful.

The elements of the final catalogue entries have been arrived at as follows:

TITLES follow the published literature on the artist. Much of this literature is from the Nineteen Twenties, Thirties, and Forties, and it has seemed best to insure that titles used then, in dealer's catalogues, reviews, and elsewhere, are likewise used here, to prevent confusion. Sometimes Nason wrote titles in the lower margins of his prints, and these have been an invaluable reference wherever they have been found. So have the titles in his *Chronological List* of 1945* and in his priced lists of prints in the files of the Boston Public Library.

Roughly one-fourth of Nason's prints are book illustrations. Where titles are printed in the book (only in *The Poems of William Cullen Bryant* of 1947 was this done), they are followed here. For other books, including the *Walden* of 1938, titles have been assigned.

MEDIUM: most of Nason's prints are wood engravings, but there are almost a hundred copper engravings which constitute a major part of his work. There are also a handful of woodcuts among his early work, one linoleum cut (No. 543), and one drawing which is listed in the catalogue of prints since it was made to be reproduced as an electrotype for the printing of a bookplate (No. 459). An important group of prints are the chiaroscuro wood engravings, twenty-five in all, the first from 1927, the last from 1964. There are also a few prints in which experimental techniques were applied with success. Examples are Nos. 157 and 393.

DATES of prints for the most part have been easy to establish. Where a block or plate was printed from, at intervals, over the years, sometimes during a process of refinement of design by the artist, the print is listed in the year

**February 1945. Chronological List of Prints by Thomas Nason. Woodcuts, Wood Engravings and Copper Engravings.* A typed list of 161 numbered entries, from 1922 through 1945, and two unnumbered entries for 1946. Each entry gives the year, title of the print, medium, measurements and edition.

of its first appearance, and the different printings are noted in appendices.

Measurements: For each print, height is given first. Measurements for wood engravings are of the image, to the limits of the printed surface; for copper engravings, measurements are to the plate mark.

States of prints are defined for the purpose of this catalogue as a recognizable stage in the development of a design, a point at which the artist printed a number of impressions from the block or plate. The printed proofs or edition reflect the artist's feeling that a design has been achieved which is worthy of attention in its own right. States are also distinguished by engraved work on the block or plate, not by variants in paper or color of ink. Nason distinguished between a state of a print and the working proofs he pulled for reference only. Inevitably, the words "state" and "working proof" sometimes became interchangeable. We have nevertheless tried, as he did, to maintain the distinction. Usually there was only one working proof at any stage at which he needed this map of his progress. Working proofs are mentioned in the present catalogue only when they are reproduced. The existence of one set of working proofs can be assumed for most of Nason's copper engravings. It appears that Nason's work on a wood block was not recorded in as formal a manner; proofs were taken as necessary, but in general the artist did not make and preserve a set of working proofs numbered in sequence.

Editions: the large extent and high quality of Nason's printmaking suggests a profound sympathy for the traditional role of the print as a medium of mass communication. Nason kept his prices low and used his prints, in the tradition going back to Dürer, as a way of transmitting his images to a large audience. The fashions in print publishing which Whistler helped popularize, a century ago, have created a great deal of clerical work for the printmaker, who spends some of the hours of his artistic life signing and numbering prints. Like other modern printmakers, Nason bowed to these comparatively recent conventions. He usually signed prints which were offered for sale, and sometimes added the date, edition, and title.

Only a few proofs were pulled of prints made as book illustrations, and the illustrations themselves were usually printed from electrotypes. If book illustrations, commissions (including bookplates), Christmas cards and other special kinds of work are subtracted, the total which remains of Nason's published prints is no more than one-third of the 610 prints listed here. This one-third constitutes the body of prints which were sold in editions on the market. Nason recorded editions in his personal record, and when he noted them on his prints, he did so in two ways, as described in the section which follows.

Signing, Dating, and Titling: Many of the prints in the largest collection of Nason's work, at the Boston Public Library, were acquired in large gifts and purchases in 1966. The artist, encouraging the effort to place these prints in Boston as a reference collection, did not have time to carry out his usual signing of the prints. More representative of his practices in signing, numbering, dating and titling are the collections of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Library of Congress, and the New York Public Library.

Boston Museum of Fine Arts

- There are 60 prints, as well as a second impression of one of these;
- 58 of the 60 are signed in pencil;
- 36 are dated in pencil;
- 18 titles are supplied (not written on the print by Nason himself);
- no edition is indicated for 32 of the prints; twelve prints are numbered (30/100 ... 36/50 ... etc.); sixteen have notation of the size of the edition only (Ed. 75 ... Ed. 50 ... etc. Also: 40 imp. ... 50 imp ...)

This last way of indicating the edition was used less frequently. Occasionally, in signing the print, Nason added the brief abbreviation indicating his role as printer: T W Nason imp.

Library of Congress

- All 55 prints are signed in pencil;
- 40 are dated in pencil;
- 16 titles are supplied (not written on the print by Nason himself);
- no edition is indicated for 33 of the prints; eleven prints are numbered (10/90 ... 34/100 ... etc.); twelve have notation of the size of edition only.

New York Public Library

- There are 38 prints, including six bookplates. Nason rarely signed bookplates, and then only for a collector or collection. All of these six are unsigned. The notes below are limited to the other 32 prints.
- 30 of the 32 are signed in pencil;
- 21 of the 32 are dated in pencil;
- no edition is indicated for 23 of the prints; four prints are numbered (39/70 ... 33/65 ... etc.); five have notation of the size of edition only (Ed. 200 ... Ed. 70 ... etc.)

Although the artist made an effort to inscribe titles in the margins of prints for museum collections, most Nason prints are simply signed in pencil (T W Nason); many are dated; some are marked with the number in the edition or simply the size of the edition; some also have an inscribed title. To this more general summary for the collector should be added the fact that many blocks and plates carry engraved signatures, and sometimes dates as well, and these are recorded in the reproductions which are part of the catalogue.

Paper, Ink, and Printing: Like a number of other printmakers of his generation, Nason went to great pains to find sympathetic paper of high quality on which to print his blocks and plates, and collected old paper whenever he could. A sequence of working proofs of his copper engraving, *November*, includes two proofs on old blue paper; proofs of *Berkshire Farm* exist on old green paper, and there are other examples of the value Nason placed on the color and texture of such papers, often remnants of French papers of the eighteenth century. He bestowed equal care and attention on the inks he used, and he was

Examining a proof

usually his own printer, despite the time and labor required; repeatedly he found that he could do this to a more exacting standard than anyone could do it for him. His comments on printing wood engravings can be found in the *Commentary* section (letters to David McCord) later in these pages; his comments on printing copperplates are quoted by John Taylor Arms in his essay, "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," which is reprinted in the present volume. In the future, expert printing from some of his wood engravings may be not only possible but desirable, to make available, for instance, the *Walden* set of wood engravings of which the artist pulled only a few proofs. Printing from uncancelled copperplates is also possible, though a student of Nason's work might doubt that the results would equal those obtained by the artist. He could pull a cleanly-wiped, austere proof for reference, then handwipe the plate and pull impressions of such warmth of tone that they seem almost a different print. A proof of *Pennsylvania Farm* in the Boston Public Library Collection has in the margin, in the artist's hand, the note "trial proof hand wiped no drag." A proof of *Connecticut Hills* in the collection of Mrs. Nason has the artist's note, "first trial proof Sep 28/35, rag wiped with whiting, Ink: Frankfort Black, Sepia (Crooke), Black (Weber) (a little), sky hand wiped." A proof of *Across the Meadow*, also in the collection of Mrs. Nason, is inscribed "T W Nason imp", "Before steel facing", and as follows: "Weber B 1 + Frankfort. slightly thinned. H W – sky warm lower cold. leave tone. drag with inky rag & drag right dark regular."

Electrotypes: For many different projects in the decoration or illustration of books, and for letterheads and other commissions, Nason knew that printing would be done from electrotypes. He pulled a few proofs, then sent his block or blocks to an electrotyper who returned them when the electros had been made. Excerpts from his letters to David McCord printed later in this volume give insights into the controls he exercised and the instructions he gave. He had learned as early as 1926 to use this reproductive process with care and concern, and obtained excellent results. A Goodspeed's Book Shop exhibition leaflet of that year has been mentioned in an earlier paragraph; in it, a print by Nason is reproduced with the legend: "Webster Place, Boston. By T. W. Nason Printed from an Electrotype of the Original Block." On occasion, the original image was reproduced in reduced size (Colonial Society of Massachusetts) or enlarged (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University) for use on printed notices, newsletters or stationery. Nason's book illustrations, unless there is specific note of printing from the original blocks, can be assumed to be printed from electrotypes.

Identical Titles (not including Christmas cards which often use the same words of greeting):

Nos. 2 and 3, *Barn in Alstead, New Hampshire*
Nos. 6 and 23, *Boston Street Scene*
Nos. 7 and 17, *Deserted House*
Nos. 13 and 600, *The Old Tavern*
Nos. 21 and 83, *Charles Street Jail*
Nos. 56, 65, 67, 81, 94 and 116, *T W N*; also, No. 79A in Supplement I, "Prints Known through Descriptions Only"
Nos. 86 and 245, *The Village*
Nos. 93 and 98, *Sand Cliffs, Redondo, California*
Nos. 152 and 421, *The Sheepfold*
Nos. 170 and (in Supplement II, "Restrikes") 171A, *Spring on the River*
Nos. 192 and 208, *Village Street*
Nos. 196 and 197, *Elm Tree*
Nos. 286 and 469, *Winding Road*
Nos. 330 and 521, *Midsummer*
Nos. 332 and 333, "*High Spruces*"
Nos. 394 and 423, *Bonnet Hill Farm*
Nos. 428 and 588, *Mountain Stream*
Nos. 494 and 576, *Star*
Nos. 543 and 544, *Birches*
Nos. 603 and 604, *Lyme Garden Club*

Prints, drawings, watercolors, panel paintings, the mounting and decoration of guns, the design and construction of useful things including his copperplate press, testify to Thomas Nason's gifts of hand and eye. His personal marks and emblems which will be found in the catalogue of his prints speak for the pride of a maker; no line can be drawn between his artistry and craftsmanship. Perhaps the best commentary ever written about him, brief though it is, he wrote himself in the *Foreword to Morning* which appears here.

217 *Morning*

FOREWORD TO *MORNING* · 1937

BY THOMAS W. NASON

THE editor of the Woodcut Society series has posed a somewhat difficult problem in asking me to write about myself and my own prints. I suppose that I should begin by saying that I was born in 1889 in the village of Dracut, Massachusetts. Shortly after my birth, my father, who was a Congregational minister, moved to a home near Billerica, but my early life was all spent in rural environment. As a youth there was no thought of my going in for art in any form as a profession, although I had early shown a certain ability to draw.

I am always perplexed by the question, so often asked, as to how I happened to take up wood-engraving. It is difficult to give a satisfying answer. In the early twenties, I became aware of an increasing interest in wood-engravings, based mainly on seeing them as book decorations and magazine illustrations. These prints, done for the most part in a bold and effective manner with rich blacks and sparkling whites, appealed to me very strongly. I seemed to see great possibilities in the medium for personal art expression. In 1922, I made my first wood-engraving, which was more of a laboratory experiment than anything else.

The decision was soon reached that I would never find it particularly thrilling to cut away the wood around the lines on the block simply to reproduce my drawing. But I was exceedingly interested in engraving extemporaneously directly on the block with a smooth-cutting engraver's tool which would go in any direction with equal freedom and which would cut a fine line or a broad one with much the same movement. I found this kind of engraving on wood a creative process within itself. As I became familiar with the use of the burin on boxwood and perfected my knowledge of printing from engraved blocks, the fascination of the process really got hold of me.

But my progress was slow. I produced a few blocks each year but continued to engrave them purely as an avocation; constantly experimenting, and striving to improve both my technique and composition. It has now been some fifteen years since the first block came into my hands. I do not know exactly how many have succeeded it but I do know that each one has presented an individual problem and that the final result is always a matter of conjecture. The first trial proof always brings a moment of keen anticipation and excitement – and often brings disappointment.

In the present print, *Morning*, I have made use of three blocks. First, the so-called key block, which comprises the darkest portion of the work and which is really the framework of the print. The second block covers the same area and, in addition, supplies the darker accents in the clouds. The third is used for the light tint over the sky. The second and third blocks are also used over the lowest part of the composition and over the tree to assist in the modelling and to gain the effect of transparency. This is the order in which the blocks were engraved; they were printed in reverse order, the lightest tint first and the succeeding blocks on top of that. There has been no attempt to use color for its own sake: the three blocks being employed to achieve a wider range in tonal values as well as to lend the effect of luminosity and the illusion of space. I have called the print *Morning*, not only because it is supposed to be cast at that particular time of day but also because I had in mind the Morning of Life – the boy's outlook and the freshness of nature.

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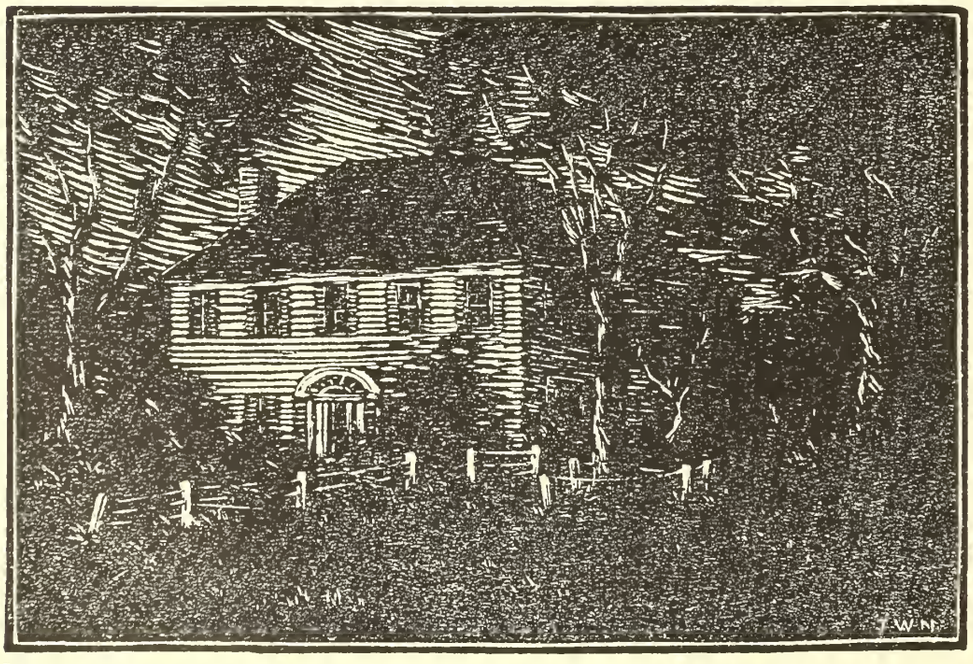

7

THE PRINTS

2

1 *Philippine Gateway*, woodcut, 1921, $5\frac{7}{16} \times 3\frac{11}{16}$, unfinished, one known proof.
2 *Barn in Alstead, New Hampshire*, woodcut, 1921, $2 \times 3\frac{7}{8}$, 3 or 4 proofs.
3 *Barn in Alstead, New Hampshire*, woodcut, 1921, $3\frac{7}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.
4 *The Old House*, New Hampshire, woodcut, 1921, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ few proofs.
5 *Boston Public Garden*, woodcut, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 26.
6 *Boston Street Scene*, woodcut, 1921, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{13}{16}$, few proofs.
7 *Deserted House*, woodcut, 1922, $5 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, number of proofs unrecorded. See the smaller version (No. 17.)

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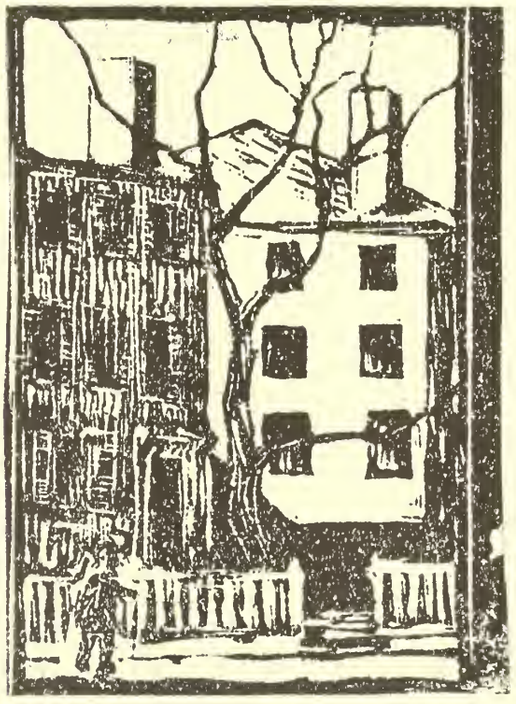

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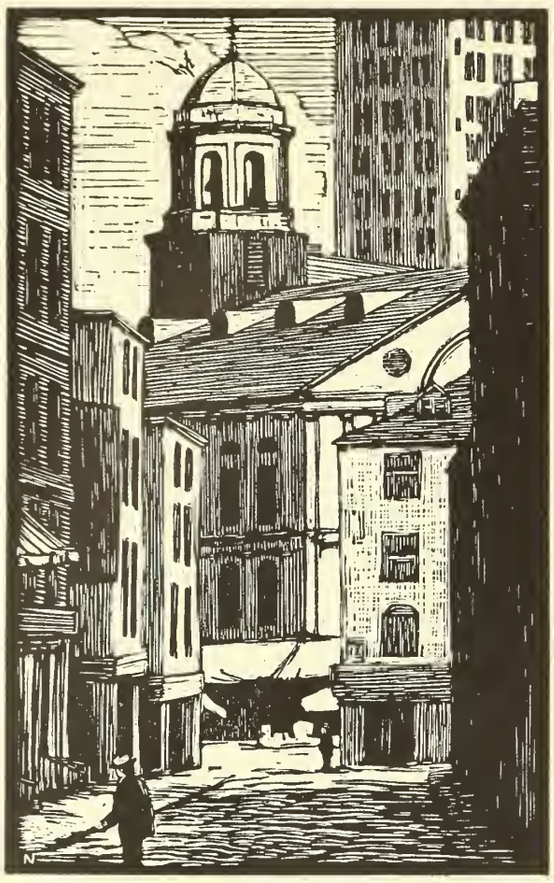

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8 *Birches*, woodcut, 1922, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{11}{16}$, 20 proofs on papers of various colors.

9 *Faneuil Hall Market, Boston*, woodcut, 1922, $7\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs.

10 *New England Farm*, wood engraving, 1922, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$, 30 impressions on a variety of papers.

11 *Ex Libris A. Scott Ormsby*, woodcut, 1922. See Bookplates.

12 *Ex Libris Douglas Vanderhoof*, wood engraving, 1922. See Bookplates.

13 *The Old Tavern* (also called *Howard Street*), wood engraving, 1923, $5\frac{7}{16} \times 3\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs. A second state differs only very slightly but can be easily distinguished by the initials in the lower right corner. The first initial, in the first state, appears most like the capital letter I but has been trimmed at bottom in the second state and is clearly a T.

14 *Massachusetts General Hospital*, wood engraving, 1923, 7×5. First state, with black border left standing on all four edges of the block, and with signature of three initials in lower left corner, few proofs. Second state, with an engraved white line in the border on all four sides, with signature at lower left cut away to leave only one initial, and with small burin-strokes introducing added touches of white to the windows at left, the tree shadow on the walk, and the shadows of the stonework below and to the right of the column at farthest right, few proofs.

15 *Faneuil Hall*, wood engraving, 1923, $6 \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

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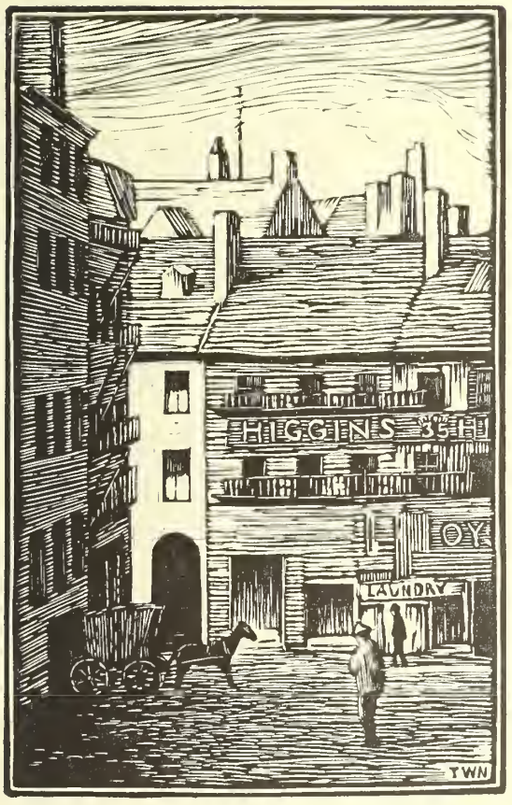

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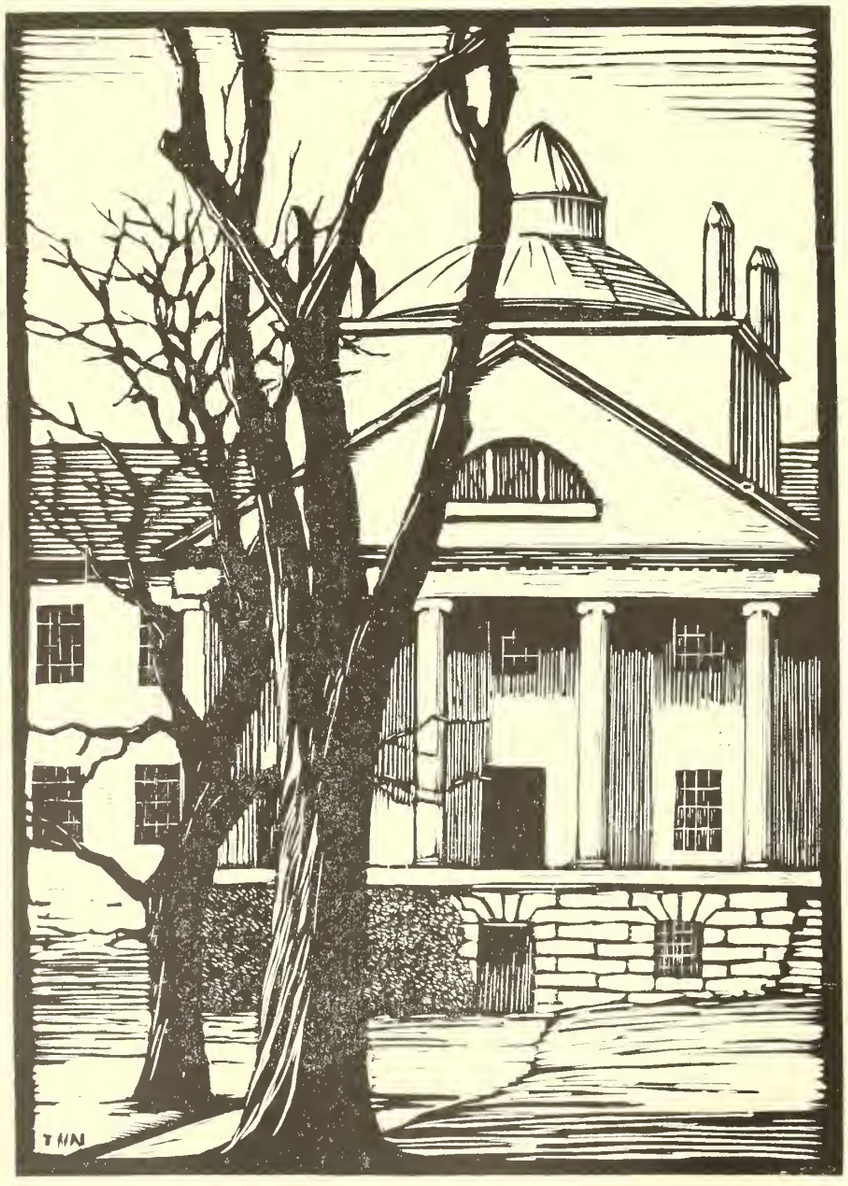

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16 *The Old Orchard*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{13}{16} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$, 20 proofs on various papers.

17 *Deserted House*, wood engraving, 1923, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{15}{16}$, few proofs. See No. 7.

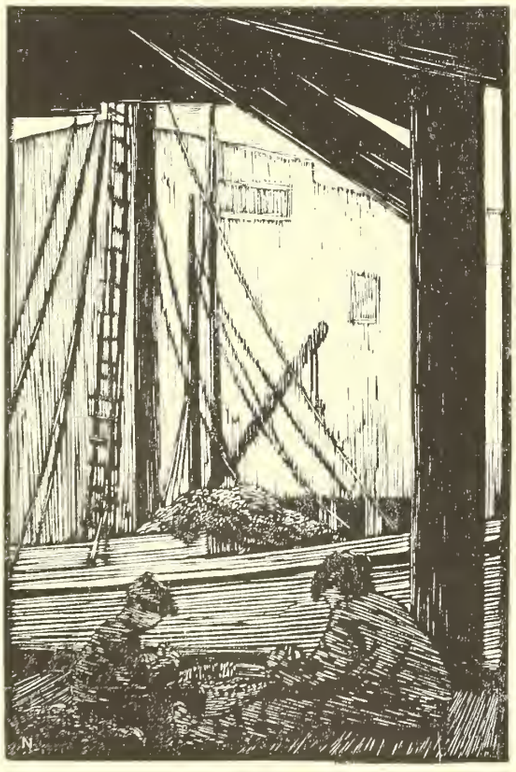
18 "*T*" *Wharf, Boston*, wood engraving, 1923, 6 × 4, a few proofs on various papers.

19 *Boston Wharves*, wood engraving, 1923, $5\frac{1}{16} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, a few proofs on various papers.

20 *Province Steps, Boston*, wood engraving, 1923, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{9}{16}$, a few proofs on various papers.

21 *Charles Street Jail*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{13}{16} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs. See No. 83.

22 *North End, Boston*, wood engraving, 1923, $4\frac{13}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.



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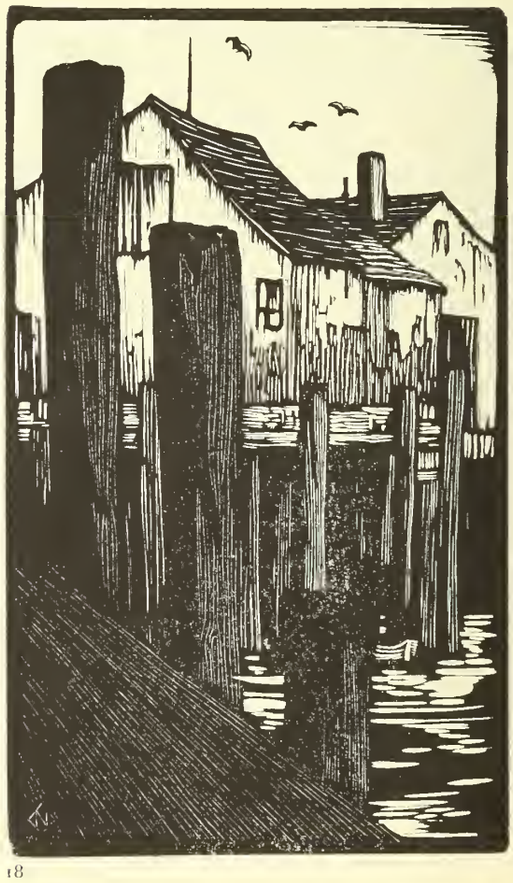

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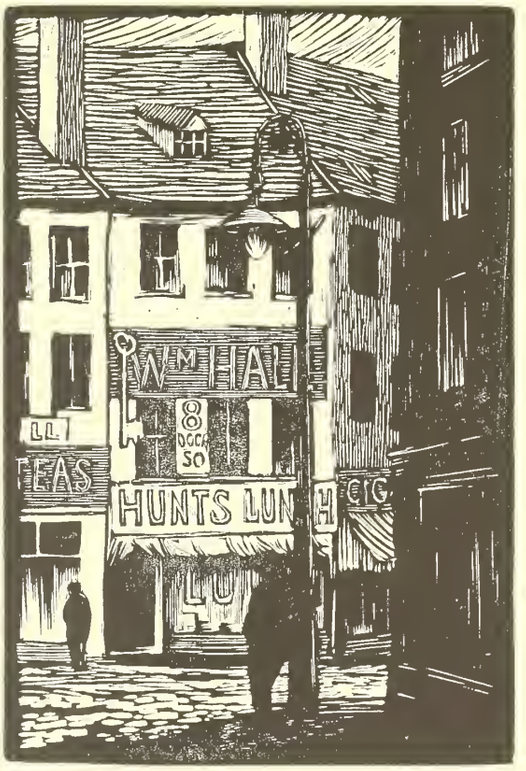

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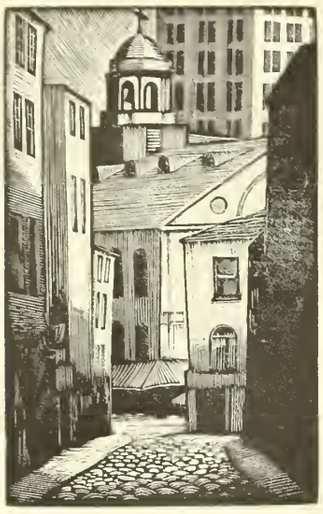

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23 *Boston Street Scene*, wood engraving, 1923, 3 × $1\frac{7}{8}$, two known proofs.

24 *Ex Libris Robert H. Burrage*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

25 *Ex Libris Charles D. Burrage, Jr.*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

26 *Ex libris Margaret W. Nason*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

27 *Russell Burrage | Ex Libris*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

28 *Ex-Libris Albert Cameron Burrage*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

29 *Ex-Libris Rachel Lee Grinnell*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

30 *Ex-Libris William Hewins Thayer*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

31 *Ex-Libris Charles Austin Doan*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

32 *Ex-Libris William Sydney Thayer*, wood engraving, 1923. See Bookplates.

33 *Christmas Greetings from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Nason*, woodcut, 1923, $1\frac{3}{8}$ × 3, about 25 proofs.

34 *Noon Hour, Boston*, wood engraving, 1924, $3\frac{5}{8}$ × $3\frac{7}{16}$, 20 proofs on various papers.

35 *Windswept*, wood engraving, 1924, 3 × $4\frac{3}{4}$, 40 proofs on various papers.

36 *Omar Khayyam Club of America, April 5, 1924*, woodcut, $5\frac{1}{2}$ × $4\frac{1}{4}$, for a menu, one copy known.

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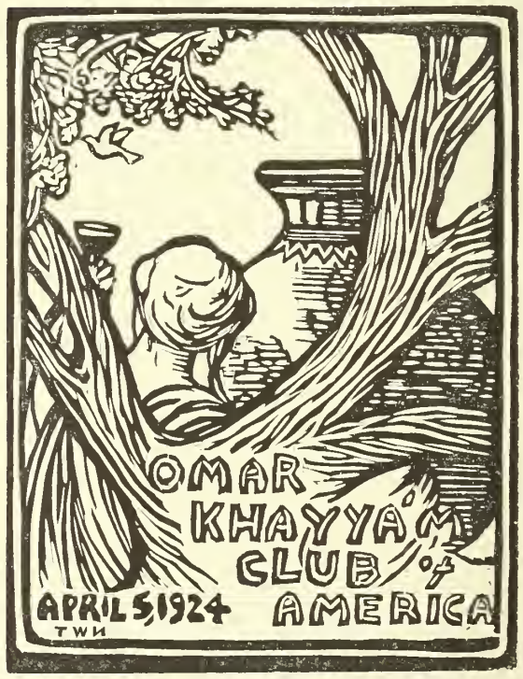

36

37 [Self-portrait], wood engraving, 1924, $1\frac{1}{2}$ × $1\frac{1}{4}$, one known proof. Another version is No. 89.

38 *Courtyard, Beacon Hill*, wood engraving, 1924, $4\frac{1}{4}$ × $3\frac{1}{4}$, 30 proofs on various papers.

39 *The Cove*, woodcut, 1924, 10 × $13\frac{1}{4}$, 2 known impressions, both on cream paper.

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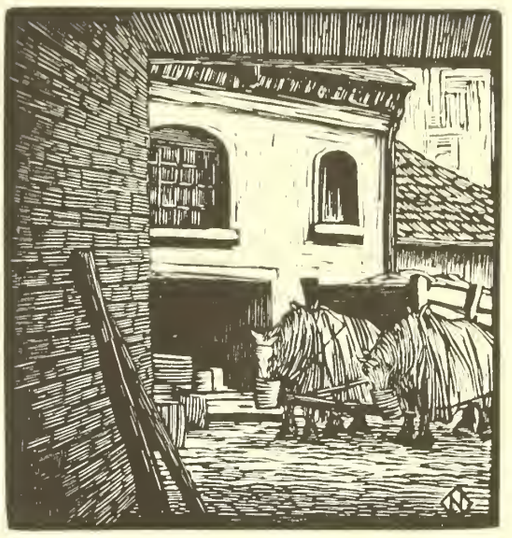

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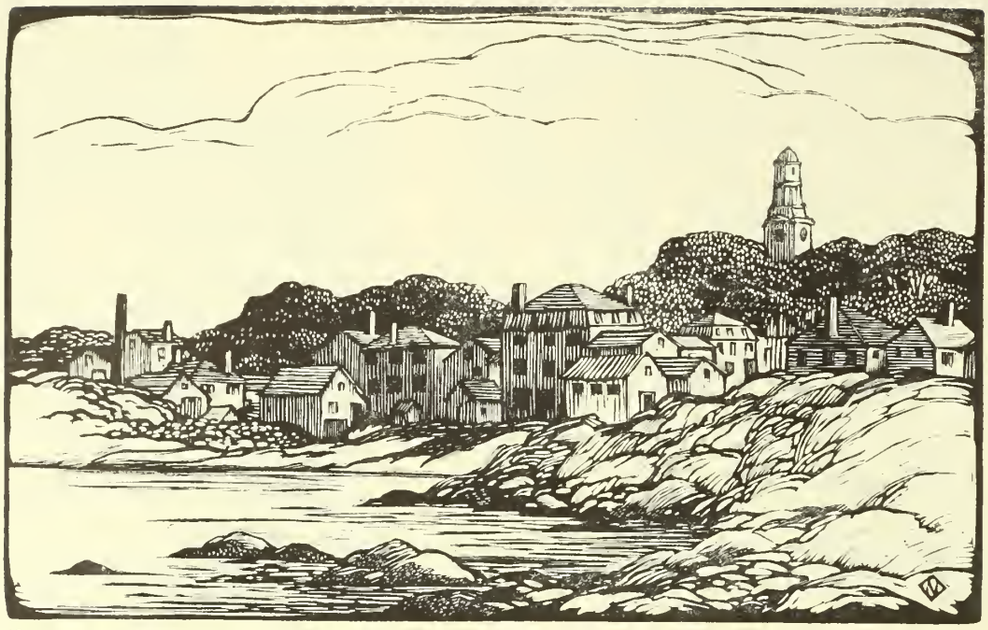

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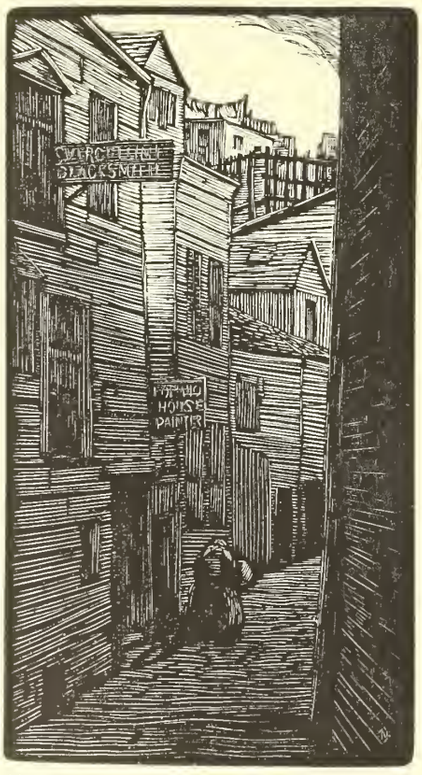

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40 *Rockport*, wood engraving, 1924, $3\frac{11}{16} \times 5\frac{13}{16}$, about 20 proofs on various papers.

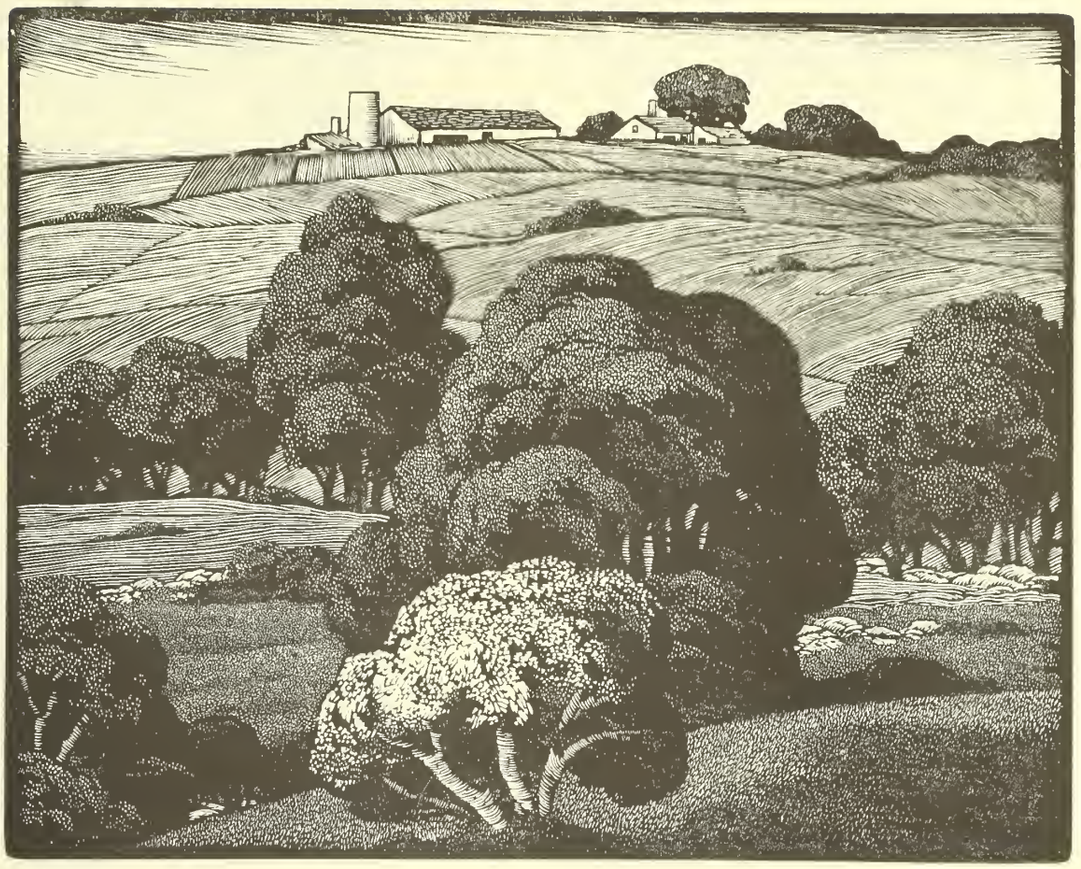
41 *The Canal*, wood engraving, 1924. First state: $3 \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs. Second state: 1926, $2\frac{15}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

42 *Ex-Libris Helen Warren*, wood engraving, 1924. See BOOKPLATES.

43 *Christmas Greetings from Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Nason*, wood engraving, 1924, $2 \times 3\frac{13}{16}$, edition about 25.

44 *Webster Avenue, Boston* (also called *Narrow Street*), wood engraving, 1925, $4\frac{7}{16} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, 40 proofs.

45 *In New Hampshire*, wood engraving, first state, 1925, $6\frac{5}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 40. Second state, 1930, $6\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$, with two rock outcrops in mowings (at left below center and at upper right) made predominantly white through added work with the burin; also, with lines cut away just above horizon at far left; edition of 40.



45 (first state)

45 (second state)

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47

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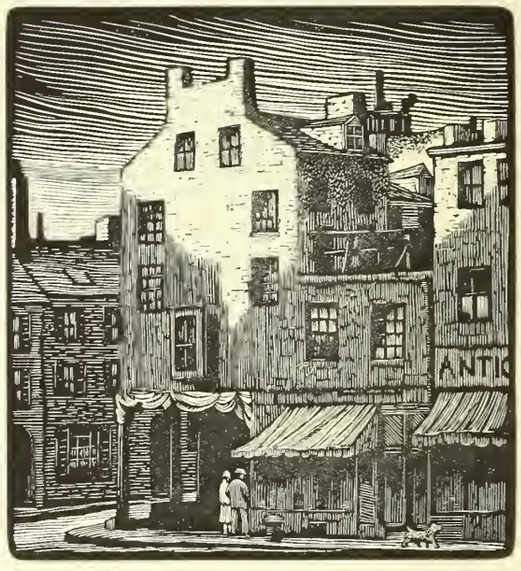

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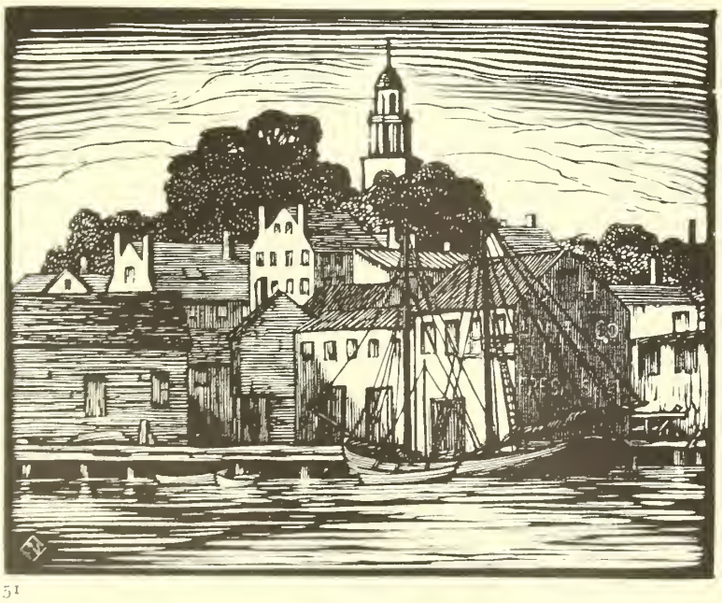

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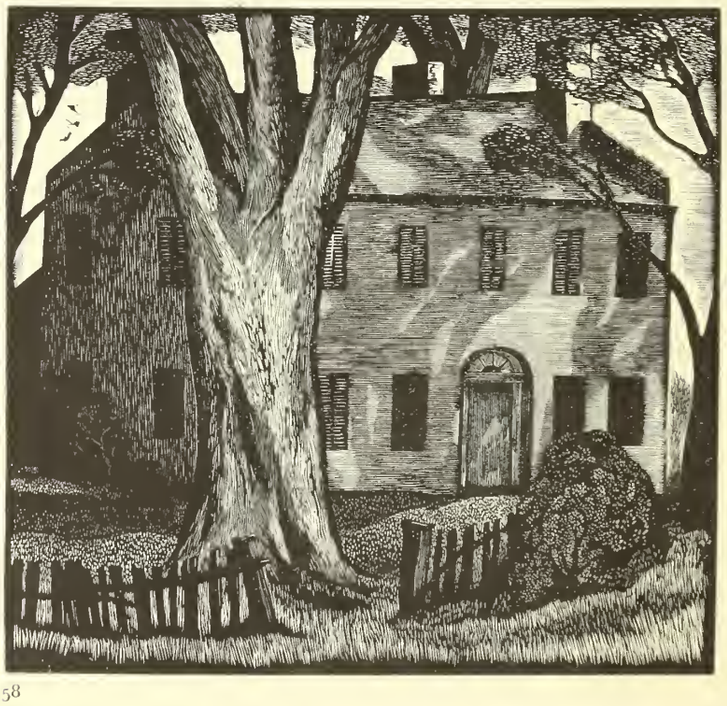

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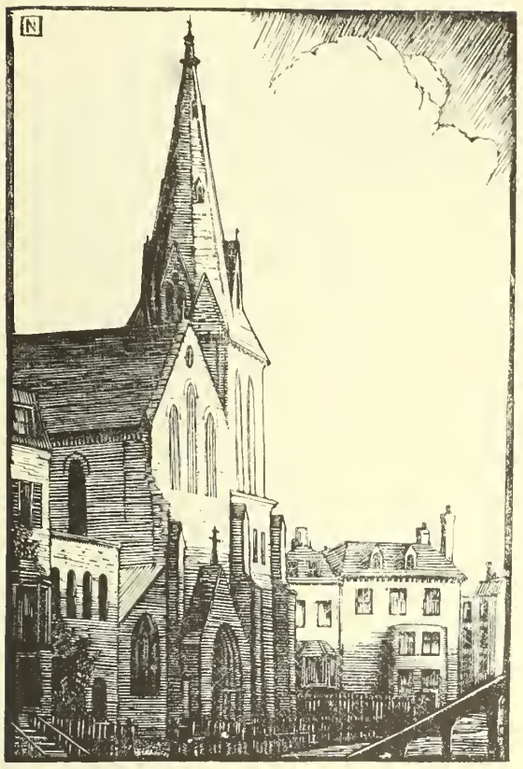

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46 *Willows*, wood engraving, 1925, 4 × 4½, edition of 50.

47 "*Gemini*," *Hancock, New Hampshire*, wood engraving, 1925, $2\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

48 *Androcles and the Lion*, wood engraving, 1925, $3\frac{7}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

49 *Primrose Court, Boston*, wood engraving, 1925, 3 × 3, about 30 proofs on various papers.

50 *Church of the Advent, Boston*, wood engraving, 1925, $6\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$, two impressions known.

51 *Gloucester*, wood engraving, 1925, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, two known impressions.

52 *Old Boston Houses*, wood engraving, 1925, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 40.

53 *Birch Tree*, wood engraving, 1925, $1\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$, two known impressions. This and the following two wood engravings were used by the artist in a folder advertising his skills.

54 *The Chapel*, wood engraving, 1925, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$.

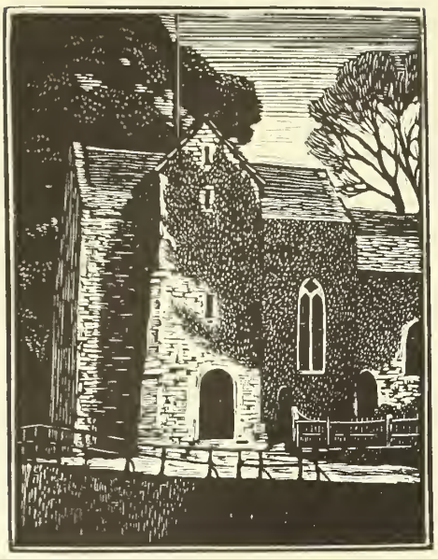
55 *The Plowman*, wood engraving, 1925, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 3$.

56 *T W N*, wood engraving, 1925, $1\frac{9}{16} \times 1$ (including border and lettering of address), few proofs.

57 (second state)

57 *Clam Digger's Shack*, wood engraving, 1925, first state: $1\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$, with lower frame freely handled and indistinct; second state identical in measurements but with the bottom of the print clearly established, the clear line of definition extending upward at the two lower corners; few proofs. See No. 75.

58 *House in Charlestown, New Hampshire*, wood engraving, 1925, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, a few proofs on various papers.



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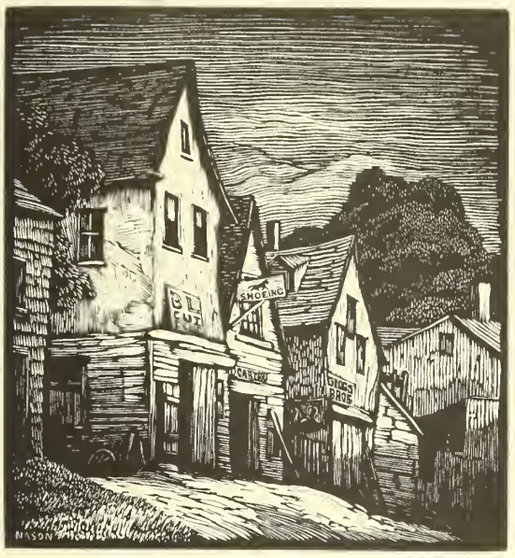


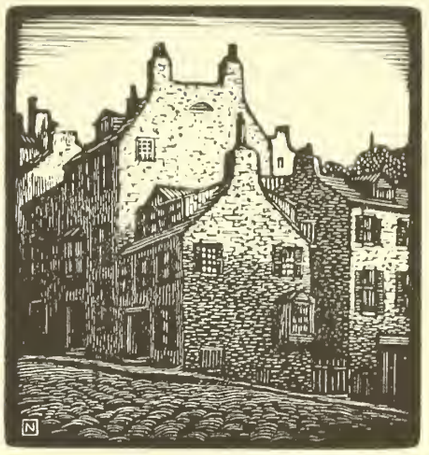
63

63 River Street
BOSTON

65

63 RIVER STREET
BOSTON

67



64

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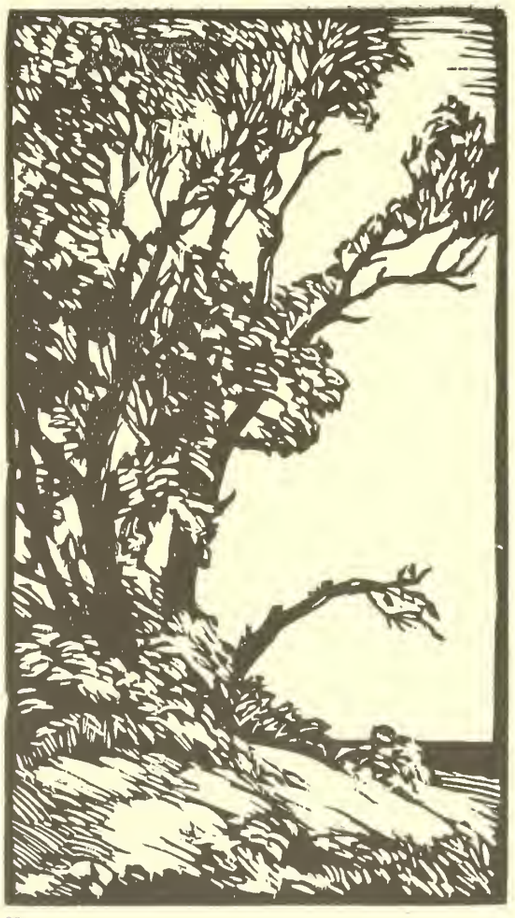


68

59 *An English Church*, wood engraving, 1925, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

60 *Ex-Libris Thomas Nason*, wood engraving, 1925. See Bookplates.

61 *Merry Christmas*, wood engraving, 1925, $4\frac{1}{16} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, about 25 impressions.

62 *House in Digby, Nova Scotia*, wood engraving, 1926, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$, 75 impressions printed in various colors on various papers.

63 *The Blacksmith's Shop*, wood engraving, 1926, first state, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs; second state, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, 50 signed proofs; also a printing of about 275 impressions, unsigned, used in Louis A. Holman's portfolio of 1926, *The Graphic Processes*, published by Goodspeed's Book Shop.

64 *Houses on Beacon Hill*, wood engraving, 1926, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

65 *T W N*, wood engraving, 1926, $1\frac{3}{16} \times \frac{15}{16}$, few proofs. See Nos. 56, 67, 94, 116, and 136. The address below is printed from type.

66 *Tower and Trees on Shore*, wood engraving, 1926, diameter $1\frac{7}{8}$, one known proof.

67 *T W N*, wood engraving, 1926, $\frac{7}{16} \times \frac{3}{4}$. The lettering below is also cut on wood, probably on a separate block.

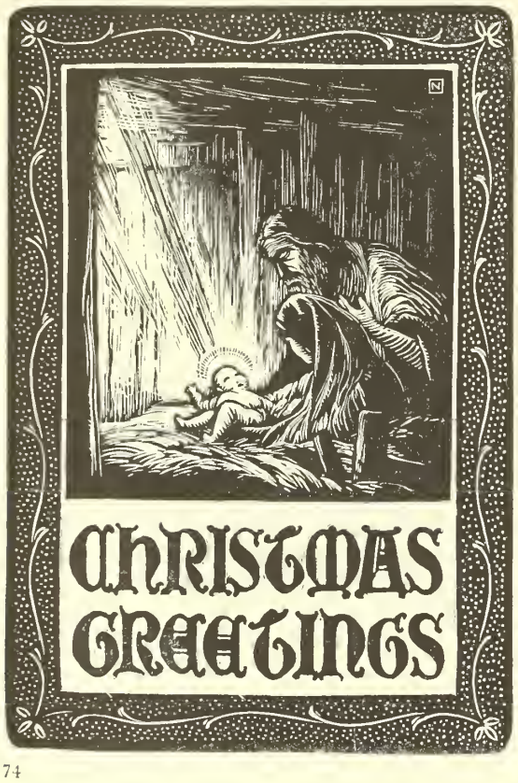
68 *California Trees*, woodcut, 1926, $5\frac{9}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.

72

69

CHRISTMAS
GREETINGS
&BEST WISHES
FOR A HAPPY
NEW YEAR &
FROM MR&MRS
THOMAS NASON

71



74

70

75 (working proof)

75 (final state)

76

69 [Beacon Hill doorway], wood engraving, 1926, 1 × $\frac{3}{4}$, designed by Nason and his sister, Kathryn (Nason) Piston, and engraved on wood by him; used on first page of four-page Christmas card (paper in French fold) for which the two following wood engravings were also made.

70 [Carolers in Louisburg Square], wood engraving, 1926, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$, designed by Nason and by Kathryn (Piston) Nason and engraved on wood by him; used on second page of four-page Christmas card.

71 *Christmas Greetings & Best Wishes For A Happy New Year From Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Nason*, woodcut lettering with printers' flowers above and below and cast-metal initial letter, the lettering only measuring $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2$, 20 copies of the card issued.

72 *Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason, Boston 1926*, in type, with lines of verse in type, below wood engraving, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, 25 copies of the card issued.

73 *Christmas Greetings, 1926, Amelia Muir Baldwin Seventy-one River Street, Boston*, in type below wood engraving, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, 20 copies of the card issued.

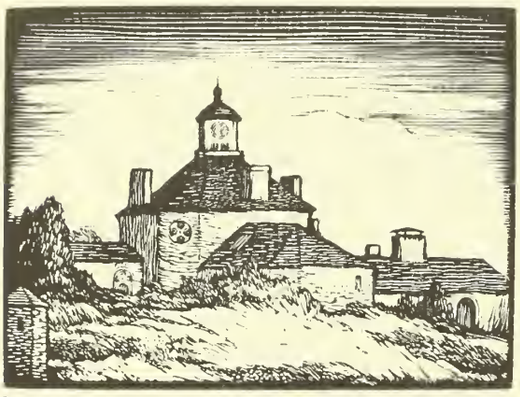
74 *Christmas Greetings*, a second use of the wood block in No. 73, with woodcut lettering added below and a woodcut and punched-dot border all around, the whole $4\frac{11}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$.

75 *House on the Marsh*, wood engraving, 1926, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$, about 25 proofs. A working proof and a final state are reproduced. See No. 57 for an earlier version of this design.

76 *Autumn Foliage*, wood engraving, 1927, 6 × 7, edition of 50.

79

82



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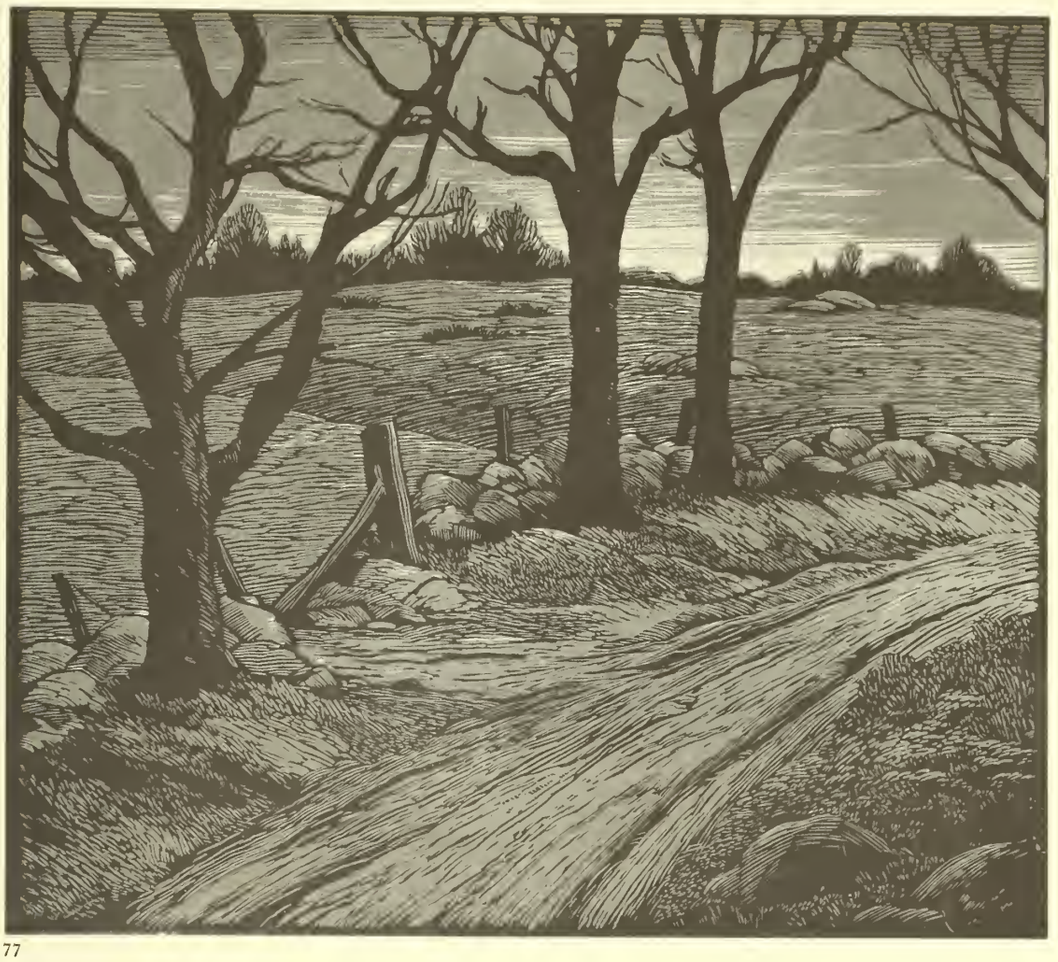


77

77 *March Landscape*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and brown), 1927, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$, about 10 proofs printed on various papers.

78 *Androcles*, wood engraving, 1927, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 3$, edition of 15. Same design as No. 48, redrawn and re-engraved.

79 *Nova Scotia Landscape*, wood engraving, 1927, $1\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 40.

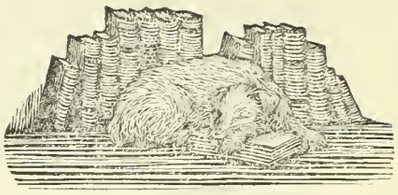
80 *Winter Afternoon*, wood engraving, 1927, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 65.

81 *T W N* [initials and burin], wood engraving, 1927, $1\frac{5}{8} \times \frac{7}{8}$, used in three-fold advertisement (2 copies known). The three wood engravings which follow were also from this folder.

82 *Don Quixote*, wood engraving, 1927, $3\frac{7}{16} \times 3$.

83 *Charles Street Jail*, wood engraving, 1927, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3$. See No. 21. (*Androcles*, No. 78, was also used as part of this folder)

84



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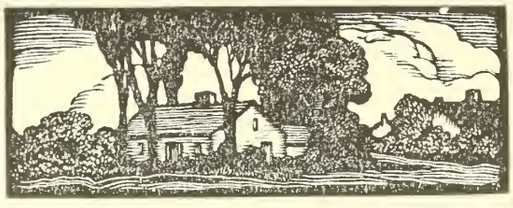
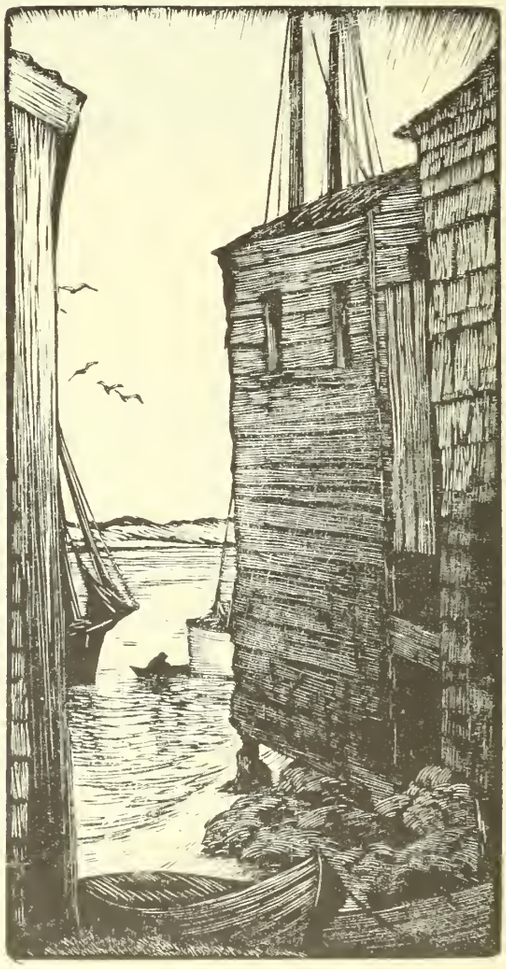


86



88

84 *Overlooking Dog Corner*, wood engraving, 1927, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs, a commissioned print for the frontispiece and dust jacket of *Dog Corner Papers, Reprinted from 'The Piper'*, by William Whitman, 3rd, woodcut decorations by Thomas W. Nason (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1927).

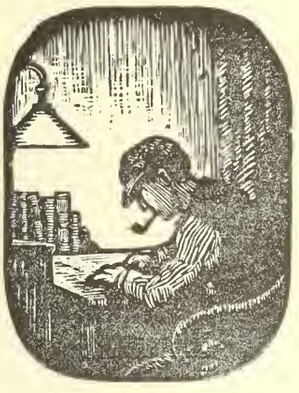
85 *The Piper*, wood engraving, 1927, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1$, for title page of *Dog Corner Papers*.

86 *The Village*, wood engraving, 1927, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 3$, head-piece used on first page of text of *Dog Corner Papers*.

87 *Book Lover*, wood engraving, 1927, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, tailpiece, p. 92, *Dog Corner Papers*.

88 *Stonington, Maine*, wood engraving, 1927, $6\frac{3}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, two known proofs.

91



89

89 [Self-portrait], wood engraving, 1927, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$, one known proof in brown ink on cream paper. See No. 37, an earlier version.

90 [Design for *The American Printer*], wood engraving, 1927, $4\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs, used on the cover of the magazine, February, 1927, Vol. 84, No. 2.

91 *On the Maine Coast*, wood engraving, 1927, $4\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 50.

90

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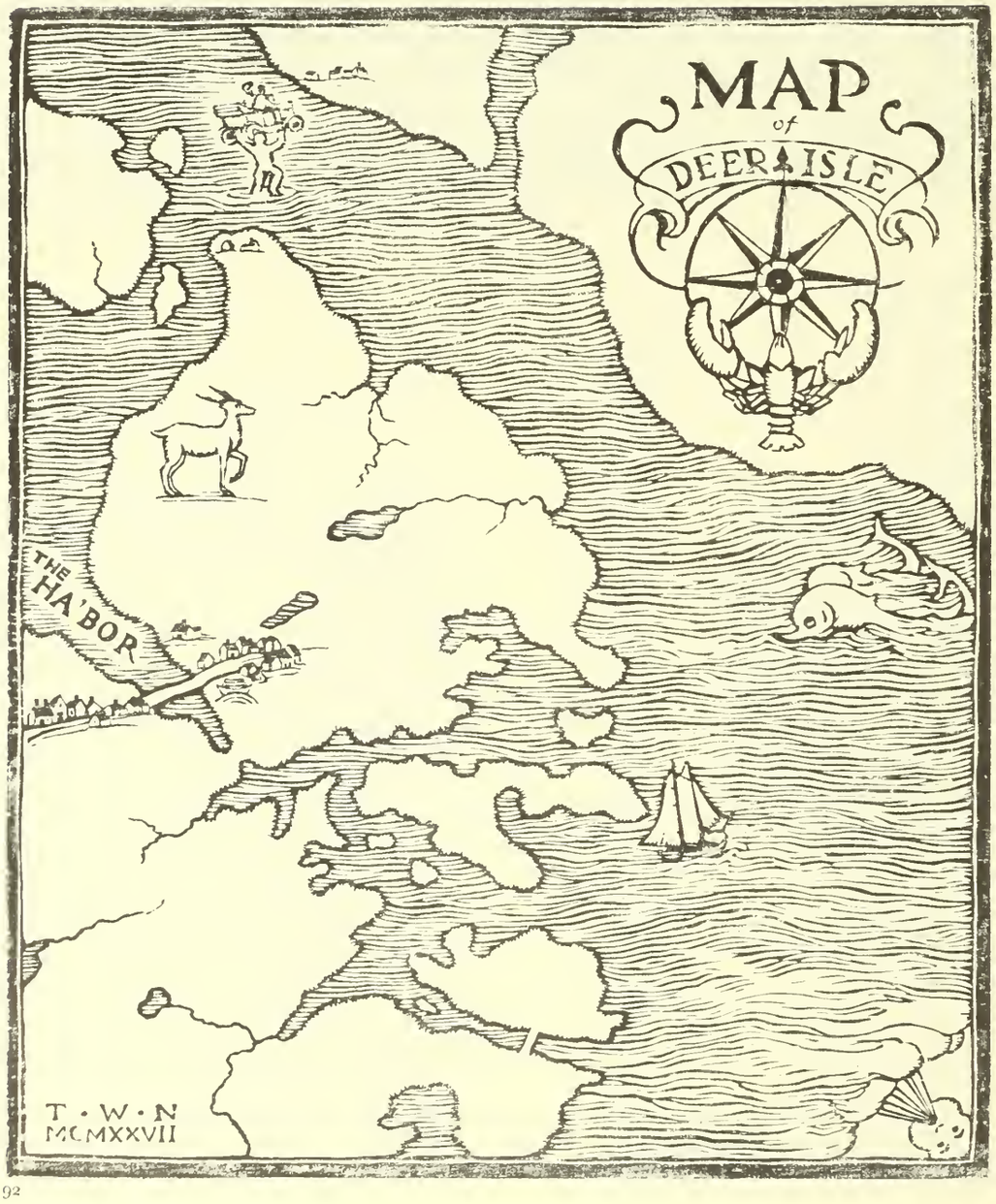

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98

92 *Map of Deer Isle, Maine*, woodcut, 1927, $11\frac{15}{16} \times 10$, 14 impressions.

93 *Sand Cliffs, Redondo, California* (large), wood engraving, 1927, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 30.

94 *T W N*, wood engraving, 1927, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 3$, few proofs. See Nos. 56, 65, 67, 81, 116 and 136.

95 [Decoration], wood engraving, 1927, $\frac{11}{16} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, two impressions known, one in brown ink on cream paper, one in green ink on white paper.

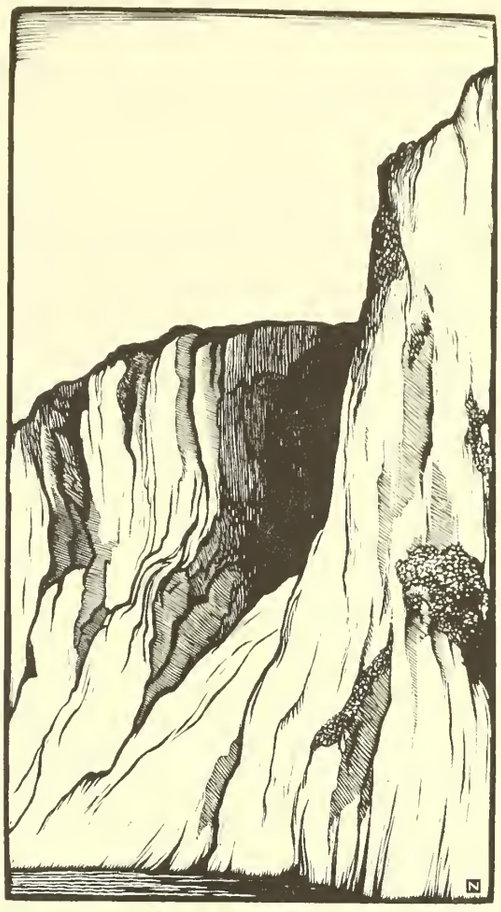
96 *House on the Hill*, wood engraving, 1927, $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{15}{16}$, later used as decoration on a card announcement, *Exhibition of Wood Engravings by Thomas Nason*, Goodspeed's, Ashburton Pl., Boston, March 6th to April 1st.

97 *Adeste Fideles. Christmas Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason – MCMXXVII*, wood engraving, 1927, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, edition of 75.

98 *Sand Cliffs, Redondo, California* (small), copper engraving, 1928, $2 \times \frac{15}{16}$, one known proof.

99 [House at 34 Spring Street, Reading, Massachusetts], wood engraving, 1928, $\frac{15}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$, used on change-of-address card.

100 *Landscape Design*, wood engraving, 1928, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 7$, edition of 40.



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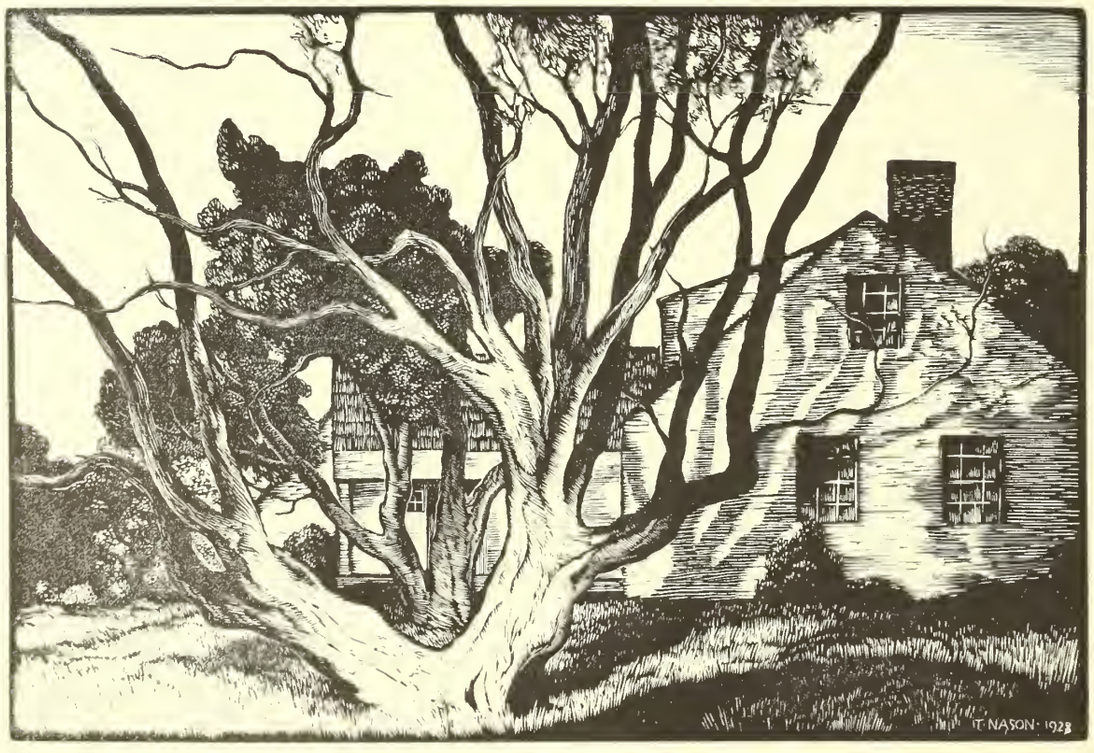

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109

101 *Back of Beacon Hill*, wood engraving, 1928, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

102 *Willow Tree and Cottage*, wood engraving, 1928, $6 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 50.

103 *North Haven Library*, wood engraving, 1928. See BOOKPLATES.

104 *Florence D. L. Lawton*, wood engraving, 1928. See BOOKPLATES.

105 *Christmas Greetings*, wood engraving, 1928, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, edition unknown.

106 *Merry Christmas From the Wights*, wood engraving, 1928, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, edition unknown.

107 *Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason 1928*, in type, above wood engraving, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{5}{16}$, edition unknown.

108 *Spring Plowing*, wood engraving, 1929, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{16}$, few proofs.

109 *The Brook*, wood engraving, 1929, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 35.

110 *Bare Trees*, wood engraving, 1929, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 5$, edition of 35.

111 *Sugar Maple*, wood engraving, 1929, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 35.

106

118

117 (first state)

117 (second state)

117 (third state)

112 *Briar Hill*, wood engraving, 1929, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 60.

113 *Lyme Farm*, wood engraving, 1929, $4\frac{3}{16} \times 9\frac{1}{16}$, edition of 65.

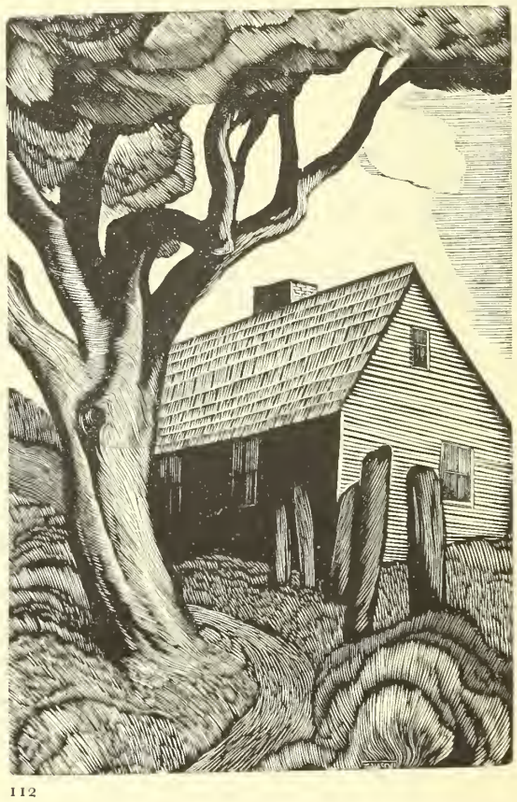
114 *Still Life*, copper engraving, 1929, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$, demonstration plate, few proofs.

115 [Shepherd and Star], wood engraving, a Christmas card, 1929, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$, about 50 impressions.

116 *T W N*, wood engraving, 1929, $1\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs. See Nos. 56, 65, 67, 81, 94, and 136.

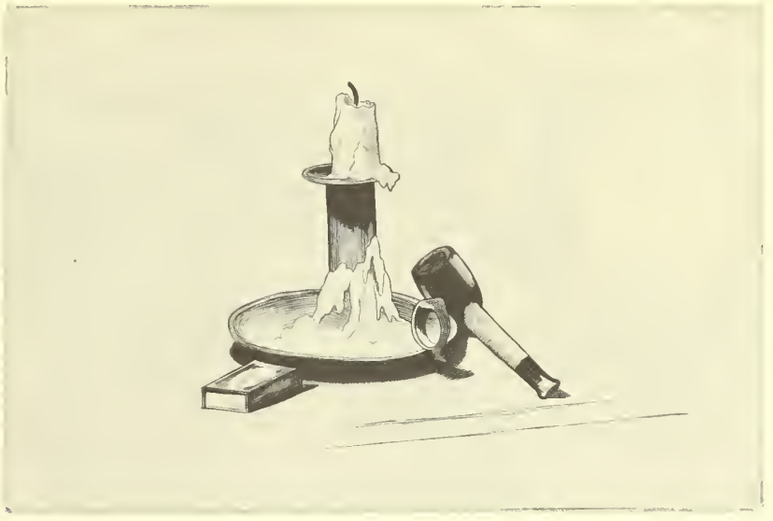
117 *Hepatica*, wood engraving, 1930, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs. The artist worked on the block at long intervals. A second state, of 1948, shows the stems, leaves and flowers engraved in a balance of black line and white line; the edges of the surface of the block remain to be cut away. This is done in the third state (1961). On a proof Nason wrote: "Book plate design for *Reader's Digest* 1961."

118 *Farm Buildings*, wood engraving, 1930, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 65.



112

113



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119 *Louisburg Square*, wood engraving, 1930, $6\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 70.

120 *Ipswich Barns*, wood engraving, 1930, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 65.

121 *Ex-Libris Samuel Robert Morrill*, wood engraving, 1930. See BOOKPLATES.

122 *Ex-Libris Mendon Morrill*, wood engraving, 1930. See BOOKPLATES.

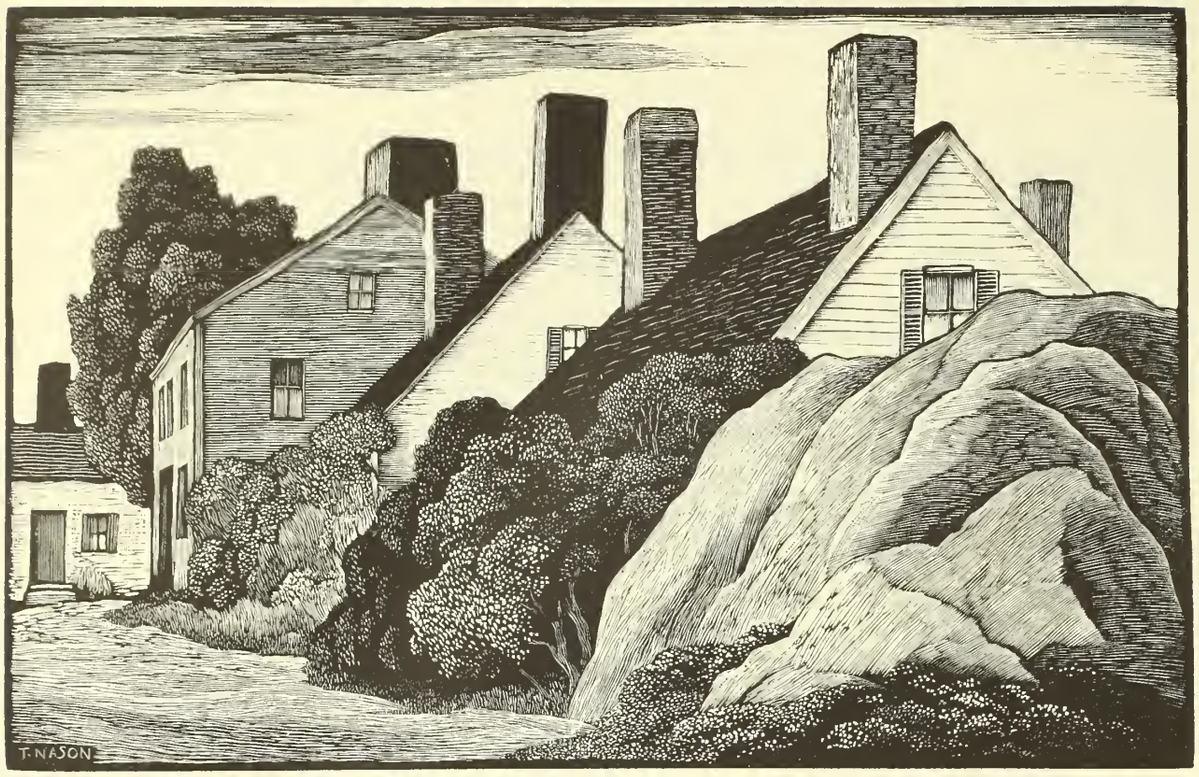
123 *Greetings from the Nasons*, wood engraving, 1930, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 2\frac{11}{16}$, edition of 25.

124 [Initial letter T], wood engraving, 1931, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$, 4 known proofs.

125 *Sunday Morning, Marblehead*, wood engraving, 1931, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 75. Also, Pynson Printers, New York, carried out a large printing on Japanese etching paper to make possible the inclusion of the print in each copy of *The Colophon*, Part 7, 1931, with the title, *Sunday in Marblehead*.

126 *Sugar House*, wood engraving, 1931, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.

125



129

127 *Beach Shack*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (2 blocks: brown and black), 1931, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 60.

128 *Old Mill*, wood engraving, 1931, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$, few proofs.

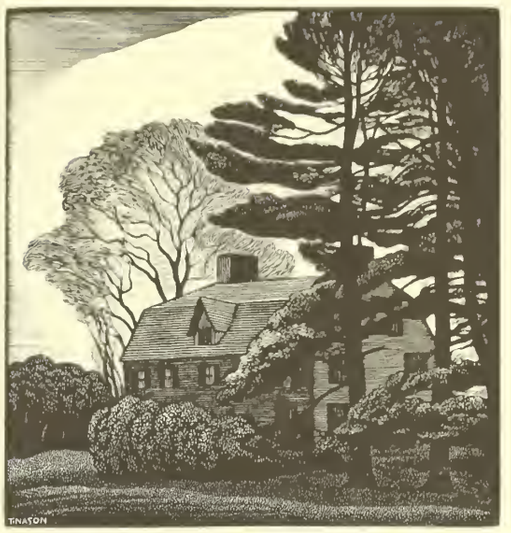
129 *Newcastle, New Hampshire*, wood engraving, 1931, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 7$, edition of 75.

130 *Forest Road*, wood engraving, 1931, $4\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 75.

131 *The Old Manse, Concord*, wood engraving, 1931, $4\frac{3}{16} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$, edition of 40. The engraving was made for The Colophon, Ltd., and the block given to Elmer Adler.

130

128



131

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133

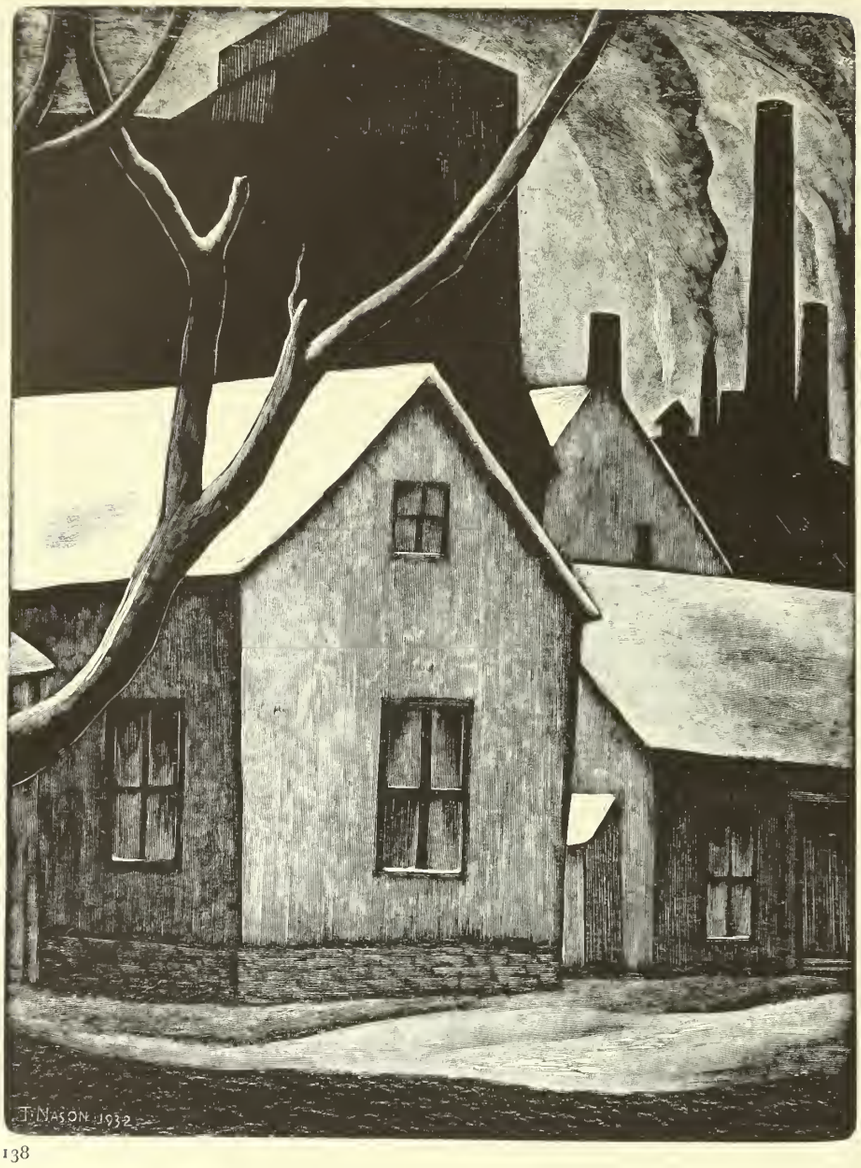
132 *Road to the Sea*, copper engraving, 1931, 3 × 5⅝, few proofs. Trimmed to the edge of the engraved design, and measuring 2⅝ × 5⅜, the print was published in 1936 in an edition of 134 for the Albany Print Club.

133 *A Deserted Farm*, wood engraving, 1931, 5¼ × 5⅞, edition of 100.

134 *Back Country*, wood engraving, 1931, 8¼ × 9, edition of 50.

132 (impression taken in 1931)

134



138

137

135 *The Grey Barn*, wood engraving, 1931, $4\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 80.

136 *Ex Libris T W N*, wood engraving, 1931. See BOOKPLATES.

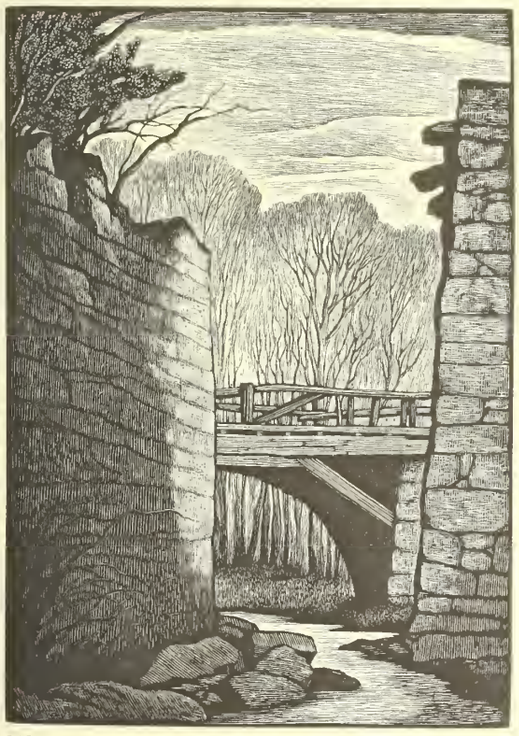
137 [Church in Snow], inscribed *Christmas Greetings from the Nasons*, wood engraving, 1931, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 3$, about 100 impressions.

138 *Factory Village*, wood engraving, 1932, $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{15}{16}$, edition of 65.

139 *The Leaning Silo*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks, black and olive-grey), 1932, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 75.

140 *The Old Aqueduct, Middlesex Canal*, wood engraving, 1932, $6\frac{5}{16} \times 4\frac{7}{16}$, edition of 35.

139



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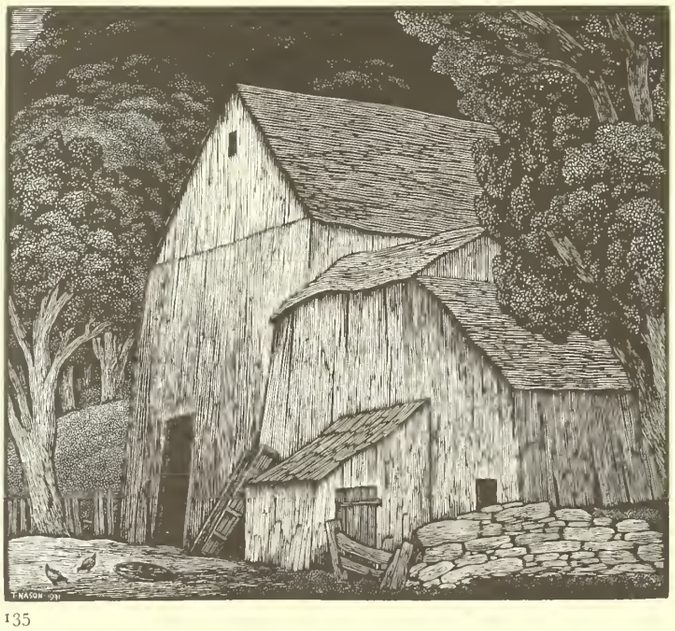
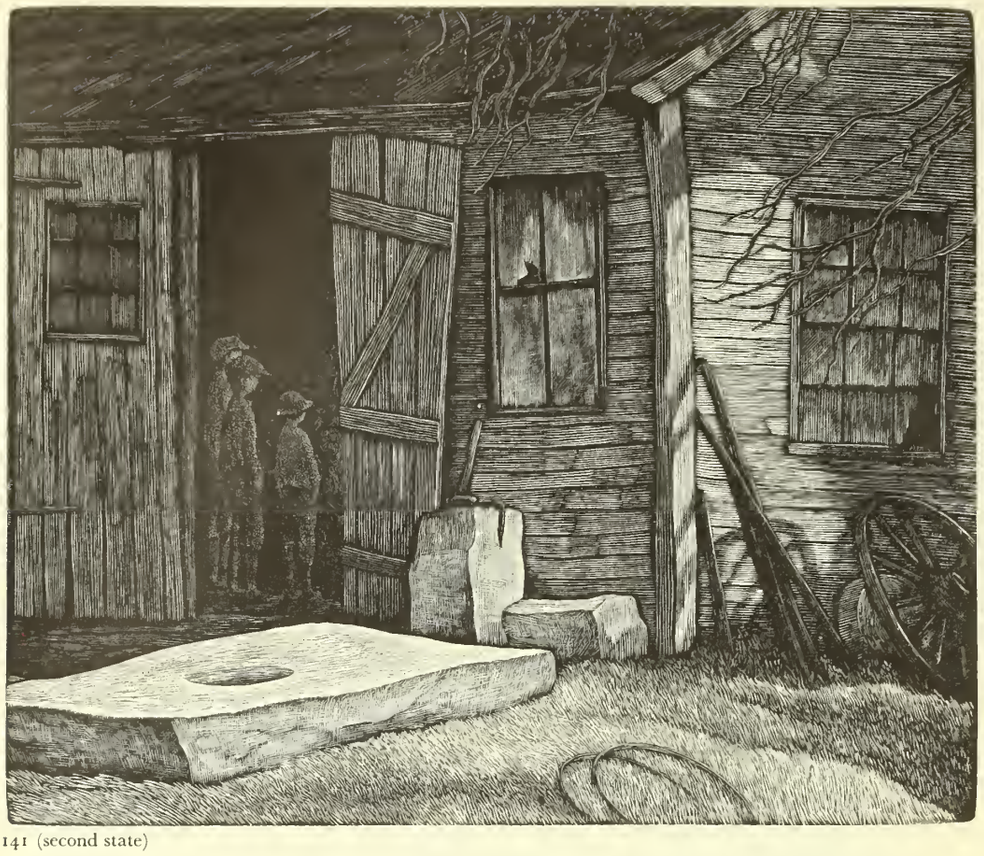


135



141 (second state)

141 *The Wheelwright's*, wood engraving, 1932, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$. First state, 1932, edition of 60, of which 18 were destroyed. Second state (reproduced here), edition of 50. Shingles have been engraved on the roof, which in the first state is untouched and prints black; the jagged black of the hole in the broken window pane near the door has been reduced by additional engraving. Subtler changes include white-line highlights added to the hinges at left.

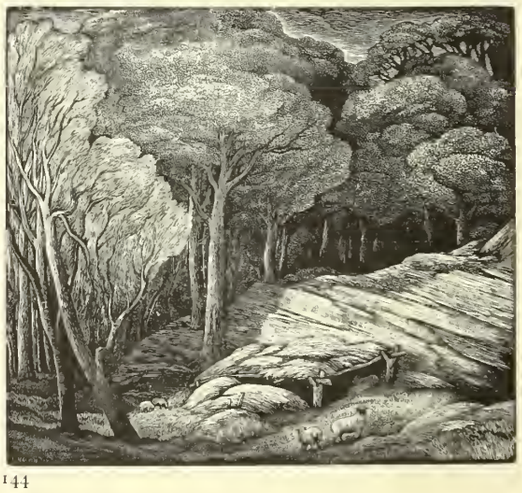
142 *A New England Scene*, wood engraving, 1932, $7\frac{7}{8} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 75.

143 *November Twilight*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks, black and grey), 1932, 3×5, edition of 50. Before the edition, there were six trial proofs, all different.

144 *Landscape and Sheep*, wood engraving, 1932, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, one known proof.

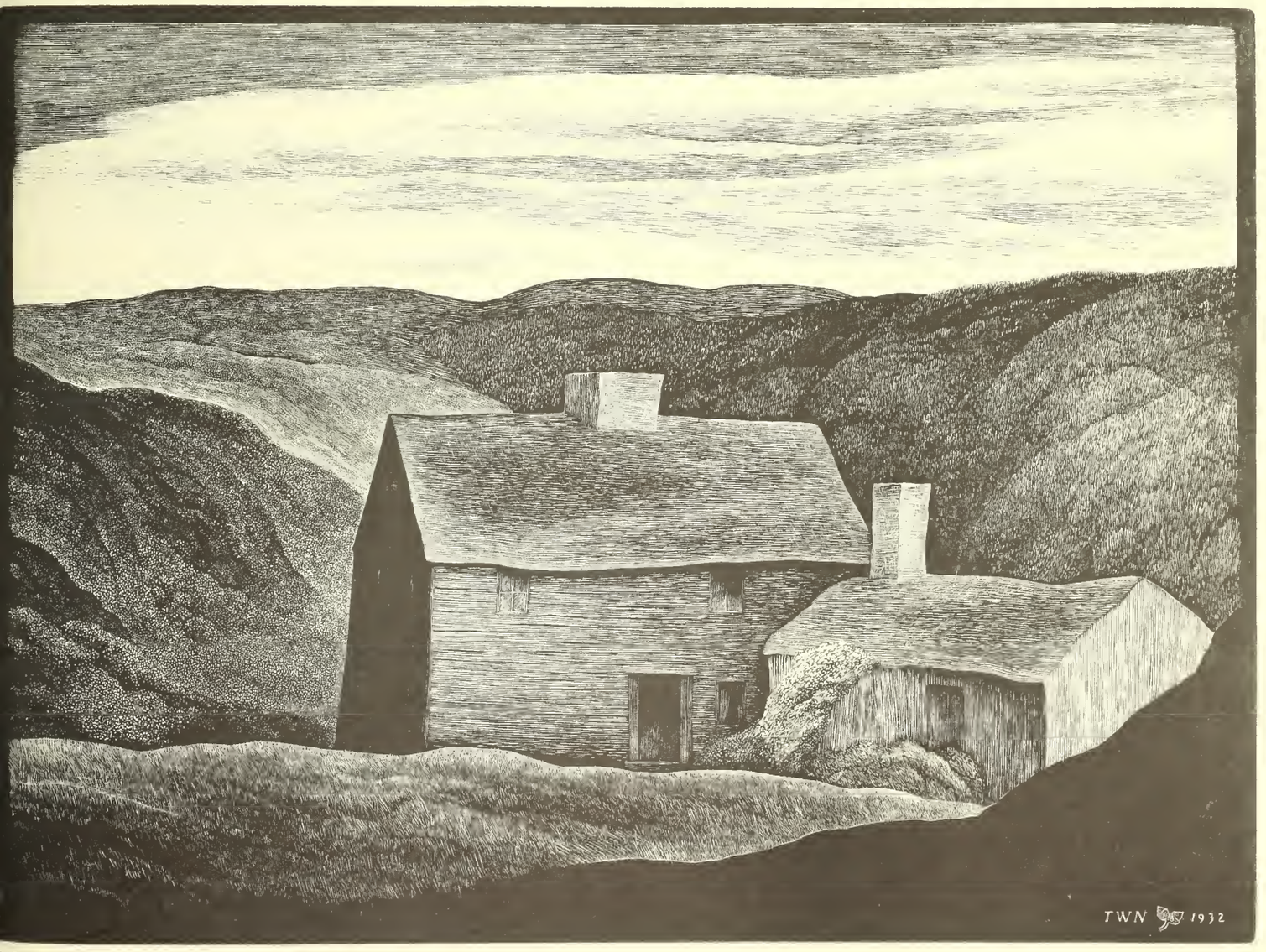
145 *Wooded Shore*, wood engraving, 1933, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$, edition of 100.

143



144

145



142

148

146 *Landscape with Marsh and Wooded Distance*, copper engraving, 1933, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$, 3 or 4 proofs.

147 *Fruit on Pewter Plate*, copper engraving, 1933, 5 × 6, few proofs.

148 *Hartwell Farm*, copper engraving, 1933, $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. First state, edition of 10. Second state (reproduced here), 1935, with additional work, edition of 60.

149 *Finnegan's Hovel*, copper engraving, 1933, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$, about 30 proofs.

150 *Marilyn Morrill*, (also called *Head of Child*), copper engraving, 1933, 6 × 5, edition of 12.

150

147

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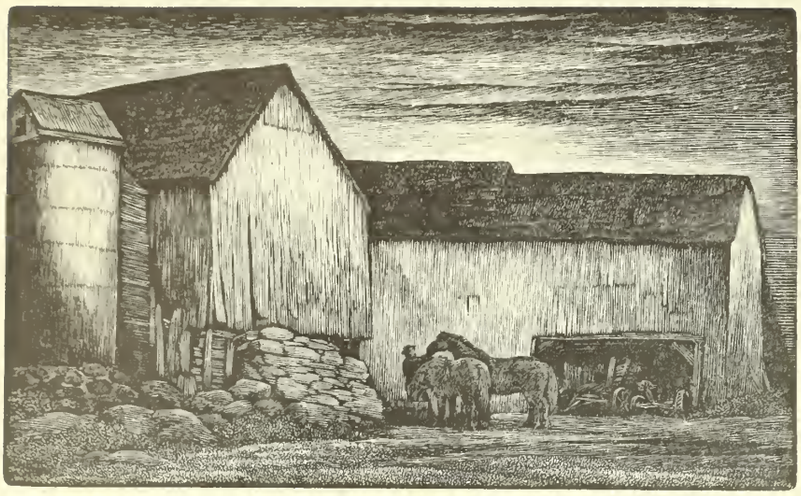

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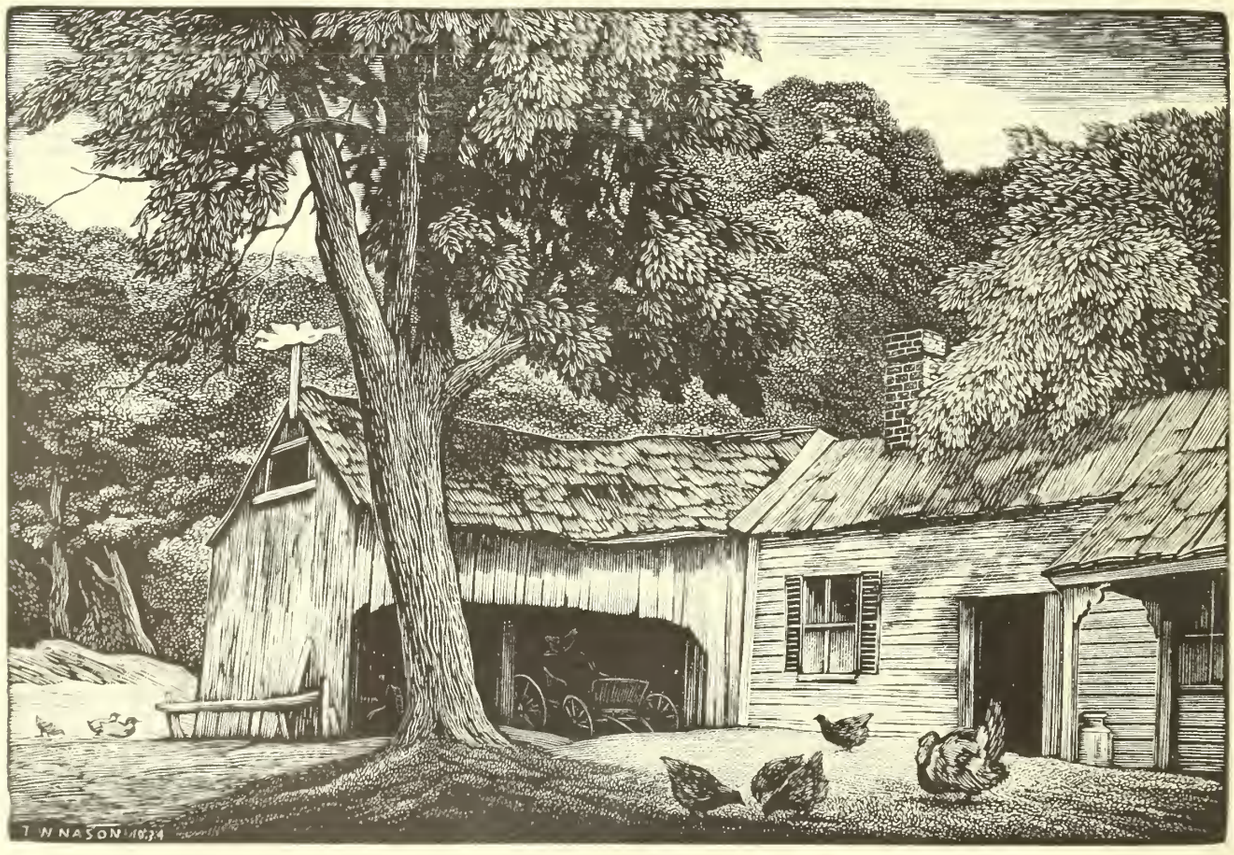


153

155

151 *Upland Pastures*, wood engraving, 1933, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 200, commissioned by the Woodcut Society.

152 *The Sheepfold*, wood engraving, 1933, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, one known proof.

153 *The Trumpeting Angel*, wood engraving, 1933, $5 \times 7\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.

154 *End of the Day*, wood engraving, 1933, $4 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 50.

155 *Willow Stump*, copper engraving, 1933, $7\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 50, but most of the edition was destroyed.

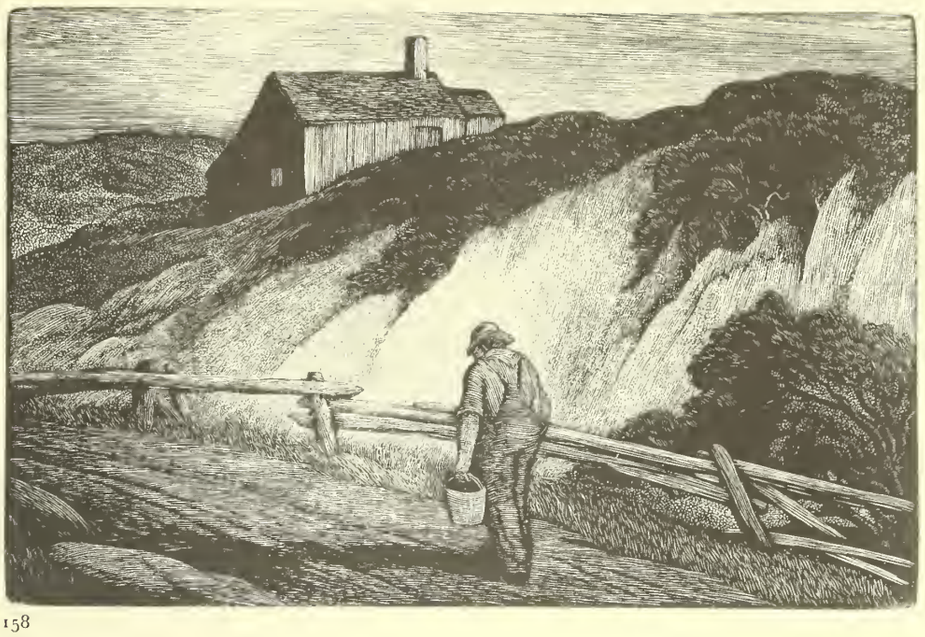
151

156

156 *Cummington Bridge*, copper engraving, 1933, $8\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$, about 50 proofs.

157 *Gypsy*, wood engraving, 1933, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs. The artist's comment: "I printed two or three proofs by wiping the surface as with a copper plate – an intaglio. I also printed two or three in the usual way."
It has been suggested from various tiny differences in detail that one design might be a meticulously engraved copy of the other. We have followed the artist's comment but believe the block was printed first as a wood engraving, then cut down slightly for printing in the copperplate manner.

158 *The Berry Picker*, wood engraving, 1933, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 90.



158

157 (as an intaglio print)

157

159 (second state)

159 (first working proof)

159 (second working proof)

159 (first state)

159 *The Woodcock*, copper engraving, 1933, 4 × 5. First state, edition of 20. Second state, 1934, edition of 40. Shown here are working proofs, with the final state at top and reduced-size reproductions of earlier proofs below.

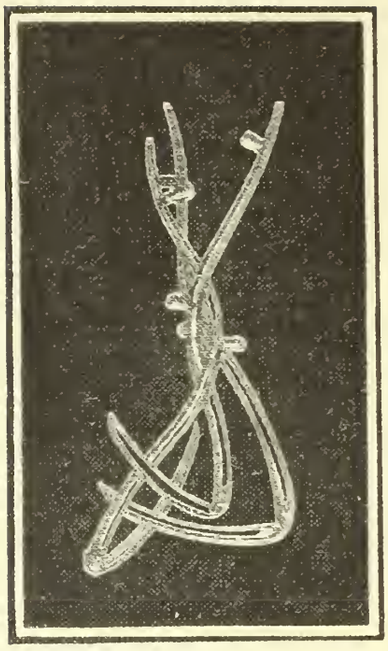
160 *Margaret Warren Nason*, copper engraving, 1933. See BOOKPLATES.

161 *Ex-Libris*, copper engraving, 1933. See BOOKPLATES.

162 *Summer Clouds*, wood engraving, 1934, 6 × 8, edition of 65.

162

164



165

163 *Old Apple Trees*, an experimental drypoint on zinc, 1934, $5\frac{5}{16} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs.

164 *Fence-Post and Rail*, wood engraving, 1934, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, about 12 proofs. Commissioned as a decoration for the dust jacket and title page of *A Boy's Will* by Robert Frost (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1934), and used by The Spiral Press on a number of later occasions. See *Notes on Printing and Publishing;* see also *Prizes and Reproductions*.

165 *Entwined Scythes*, wood engraving, 1934, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, about 12 proofs. Commissioned for *A Boy's Will* and used as a stamped design on the cover.

166 *Dungeon Rock, Lynn Woods*, wood engraving, 1934, $6\frac{11}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 75.

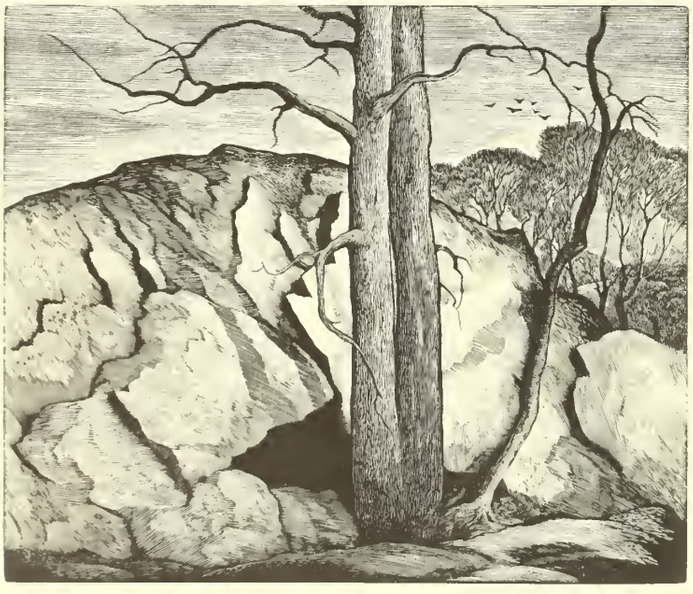
167 *Early Snow*, copper engraving, 1934, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$, First state, with beginnings of detail in foreground, 3 proofs. Second state, with added detail, especially in foreground, edition of 65.

168 *Nude Half Figure*, copper engraving, 1934, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 4$, few proofs.

169 *Portrait of Edward Morrill*, copper engraving, 1934, 7×5. First state, before letters, edition of 45. Second state, with engraved lettering, edition of 9.

170 *Spring on the River*, drypoint on zinc, 1934, $4\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, one proof, plate cancelled.

170



166

167 (second state)

163

168

169 (second state)

178 (black block)

178

171 (first state)

171 (second state)

173

171 *Feeding Time*, copper engraving, 1934, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{16}$. First state, with foreground and chickens outlined, few proofs. Second state, with additional work on sheds, and fully modelled representation of foreground and chickens, few proofs.

172 *Study of a Tree*, copper engraving, 1934, 4 × 3, demonstration plate, few proofs.

173 *Vermont Landscape*, copper engraving, 1934, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$, edition of 50.

177

174 *Edward Morrill Woolens*, wood engraving, 1934, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

175 *Ex Libris Deborah and Amédée Turner*, wood engraving, 1934. See Bookplates.

176 *Harry McInvaill His Book*, copper engraving, 1934. See Bookplates.

177 *Christmas Greetings from the Nasons*, 1934, in type, below wood engraving ($1\frac{5}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$), edition of 50.

178 *Landscape with Sheep*, chiaroscuro wood engraving, (three blocks: black, grey, olive), 1935, $4\frac{7}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 75.

172

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179 *Tranquility*, wood engraving, 1935, $6\frac{7}{8} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 50.

180 *Solitude*, wood engraving, 1935, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 60. Printed from two blocks put together, the first measuring $1\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, the second (adding clouds) measuring $1\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$.

181 *Three Sheep*, wood engraving, 1935, $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1\frac{11}{16}$, few proofs; a design for Old Lyme Hand Weavers, Inc., which used it in a label and a letterhead. There are also a few proofs of the design with framing around it ($1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$).

182 *Study of Trees*, copper engraving, 1935, $5 \times 6\frac{7}{8}$, unfinished, few trial proofs.

183 *The Little Valley*, copper engraving, 1935. First state, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 10. Second state, with plate cut down and work in sky and added details in foreground, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 10. Third state, with additional trees in left foreground and much additional detail, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 40.

184 *Spring Landscape*, copper engraving, 1935, 6×9, edition of 50. There are also a few working proofs of the plate before completion.

183 (third state)

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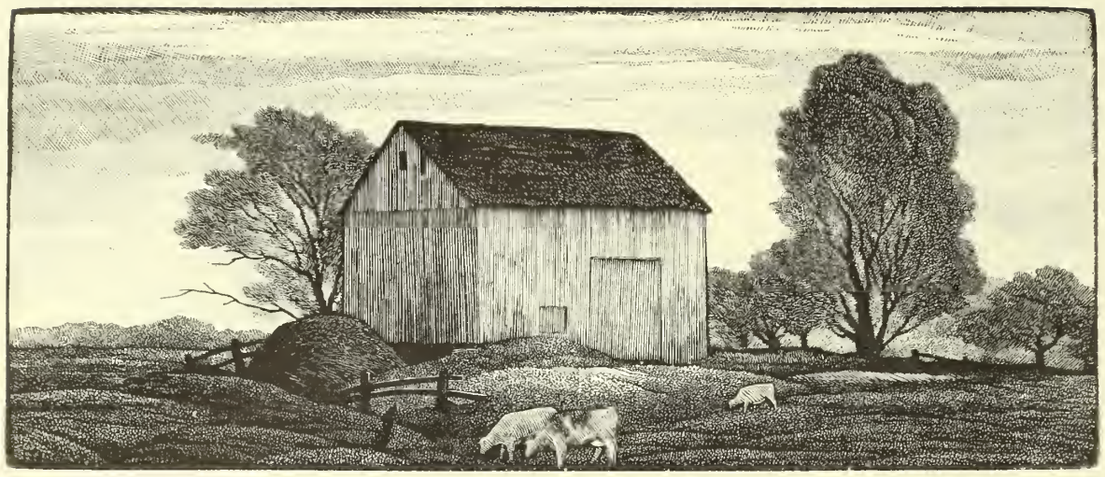

185

185 *East Wind*, wood engraving, 1935, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 50.

186 *Edge of the Pasture* (also called *Edge of the Woods*), wood engraving, 1935. First state, 6 × 10, edition of 80. Second state, 1936, a very slight and subtle lightening of the clouds and the background under the trees, 6 × 10, edition of 60.

187 *Rocky Promontory with Trees*, copper engraving, 1935, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{15}{16}$, unfinished, few proofs.

187

186 (first state)

186 (second state)

188 (first state)

188 (second state)

189

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191

192

188 *Connecticut Hills*, copper engraving, 1935. First state, $5\frac{1}{8} \times 10$, 35-40 proofs. Second state, plate cut down to $4\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$, with much additional work, 12-15 proofs.

189 *The Farm Lane*, copper engraving, 1935, 3×6, edition of 76. See *Notes on Printing and Publishing*.

190 *Street in Ipswich*, copper engraving and drypoint, 1935, $6 \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, about 40 proofs.

191 *Spring Evening*, copper engraving, 1935, 2×3, edition of 20.

192 *Village Street*, wood engraving, 1935, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$, few proofs. See No. 208, a different engraving of the same design.

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193 *Dead Trees*, etching on zinc, 1935, 5 × 7, few proofs.

194 *Christmas Greetings*, wood engraving, 1935, 2 × $3\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 100.

195 *Jack-in-the-Pulpit*, copper engraving, 1935, 7 × 5, demonstration plate, few proofs.

196 *Elm Tree*, wood engraving, 1936, $3\frac{3}{4}$ × $3\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs.

197 *Elm Tree*, copper engraving, 1936, 4 × $2\frac{15}{16}$, demonstration plate, few proofs.

198 *Connecticut Pastoral*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, grey, olive), 1936, $3\frac{1}{4}$ × $4\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 100. Working proofs in one and two colors, without sky, exist and date from 1933. The tint block used then was discarded, and two rectangular tint blocks added, in 1936. Besides the edition of 100, a large printing was made for *The Colophon*, Spring, 1936 (New Series, No. 4).

[*Road to the Sea*, copper engraving. See No. 132.]

199 *Haddam Farm*, copper engraving, 1936, 4 × 5, steel-faced and printed in an edition of 90 for the Rochester Print Club. There are also a few proofs taken before steel facing.

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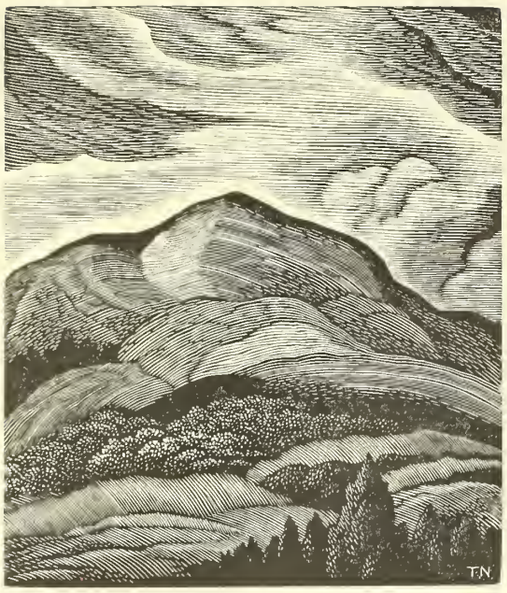


200

203

200 *Mountain*, wood engraving, 1936, $3\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, used on dust jacket of Lionel Wiggam's *Landscape with Figures* (New York: The Viking Press, 1936) and also pasted onto front cover. The following five wood engravings also were designed for this book.

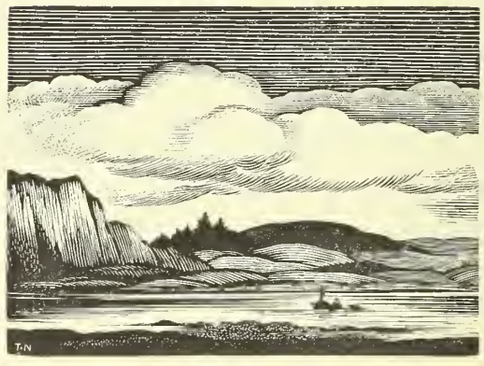
201 *Brook*, wood engraving, 1936, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$, title page. See No. 302.

202 *Bay*, wood engraving, 1936, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 2\frac{13}{16}$, page 9.

203 *The Climber*, wood engraving, 1936, $3 \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, page 25.

204 *Walk in Wilderness*, wood engraving, 1936, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$, page 33.

205 *The Bee*, wood engraving, 1936, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$, page 49. An adaptation of the design was engraved for use as a honey label. See No. 327.



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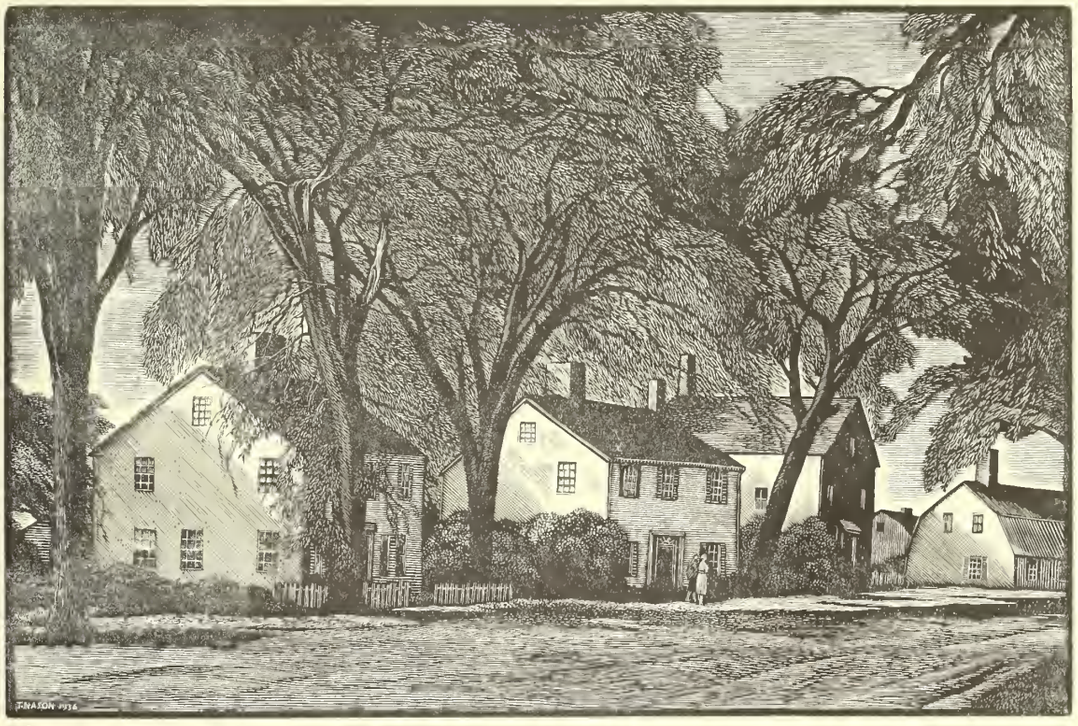
206 *Apple Tree and Scythe*, wood engraving, 1936, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

207 *Maine Landscape*, copper engraving, 1936, 4 × 6, demonstration plate, few proofs. See No. 520.

208 *Village Street*, wood engraving, 1936, $6\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 80.

209 *Snow in Vermont*, copper engraving, 1936, $1\frac{9}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, 50 proofs, and additional 25 proofs used as Christmas cards.

209



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215

210 *Mountain Farm*, copper engraving, 1936, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 6$, edition of 50.

211 *Place in the Forest*, copper engraving, 1937, $1\frac{13}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

212 *Autumn*, wood engraving, 1937, $1\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$, edition of 25.

213 *On the Island*, wood engraving, 1937, $5\frac{3}{8} \times 10$, edition of 80.

214 *Hills and Trees*, wood engraving, 1937, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, one known proof.

215 *Across the Meadow*, copper engraving, 1937, 7×10. Before steel facing, 12 proofs. With plate steel-faced, 10-12 impressions. With steel facing removed, edition of 35.

214

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220

216 *Village Church*, wood engraving, 1937, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 5$, designed for use on dust jacket of *A Mighty Fortress* by Le Grand Cannon, Jr. (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937).

217 *Morning*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, grey, olive), 1937, 5×8, edition of 200 for the Woodcut Society.

218 *Approach of Spring*, copper engraving, 1937, 5×7. Before steel facing, edition of 10. After steel facing, edition of 379 for the Society of American Etchers.

219 *Cliffs and Trees*, wood engraving, 1937, $1\frac{13}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$, one proof.

220 *Bucks County Farmhouse*, wood engraving, 1937, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, about 10 proofs by the artist and edition of 400 by the Pynson Printers for Elmer Adler.

221 *Old Deerfield*, copper engraving, 1937. First state, 3×4, with no engraved title and bottom panel blank, 6 proofs. Second state, 3×4, with OLD DEERFIELD in upper left corner, few proofs. Third state, with *Christmas Greetings from Margaret and Tom Nason* in panel at bottom, steel-faced, about 30 impressions. Final state, steel facing removed, Christmas inscription at bottom removed, plate cut down to eliminate panel at bottom, cross-hatching and additional parallel lines added to nearest two houses, about 25 impressions.

222 *E A* [Elmer Adler], wood engraving, 1937. See BOOKPLATES.

223 *James D. Colt Memorial Library, Chestnut Hill Garden Club*, copper engraving, 1937. See BOOKPLATES.

224 *El Libro de Carl Tilden Keller*, copper engraving, 1937. See BOOKPLATES.

225 *Ex Libris John Taylor Arms III*, copper engraving, 1937. See BOOKPLATES.

221 (first state)

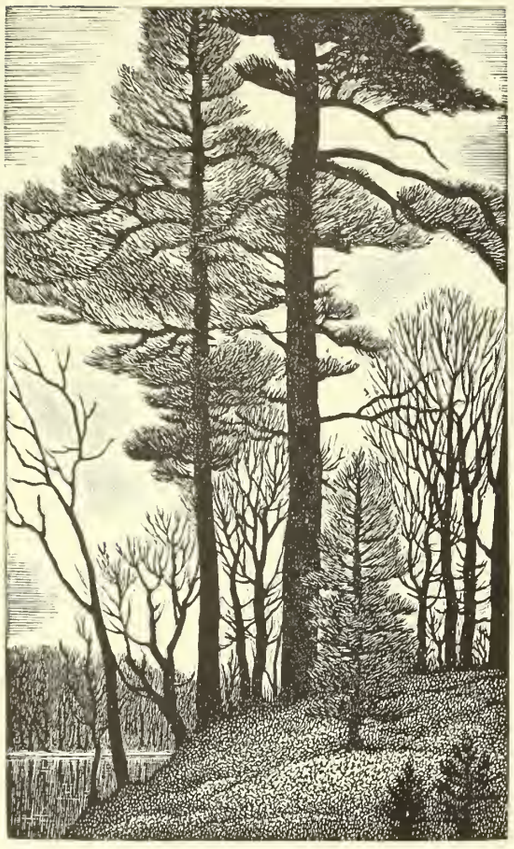
221 (second state)

221 (third state)

221 (fourth state)

216

217



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228

226 *Pine Trees*, wood engraving, 1938, $5\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs. This is the first of forty-two prints illustrating *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau (New York: The Heritage Club, 1939).

227 *Pine Cone*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$, vignette for title page of *Walden*.

228 *Walden Pond*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, for *Walden*, p. 13.

229 *Scarecrow*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{11}{16} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, p.31.

230 *Family on the Move*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 51.

231 *Thoreau's House*, wood engraving, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 55.

232 *Hollowell Farm*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{13}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 89.

233 *The Pond*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 92.

234 *Shady Bank*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$, p. 104.

235 *Reading*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 105.

236 *Open Book*, wood engraving, 1938, $\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$, p. 115.

237 *The Train*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{5}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 117.

238 *Sumach*, wood engraving, 1938, $1 \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, p. 120.

239 *Owl*, wood engraving, 1938, $2 \times 3\frac{5}{8}$, p. 130.

240 *The Bell*, wood engraving, 1938, $\frac{7}{8} \times \frac{13}{16}$, p. 133.

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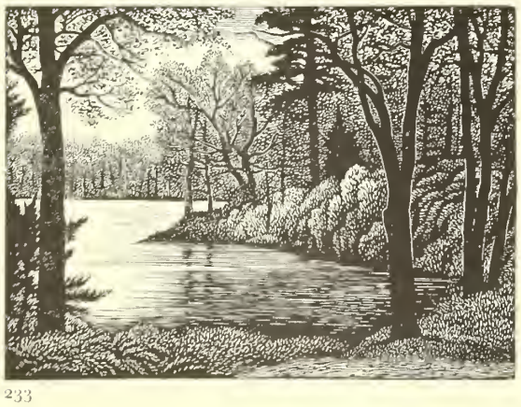

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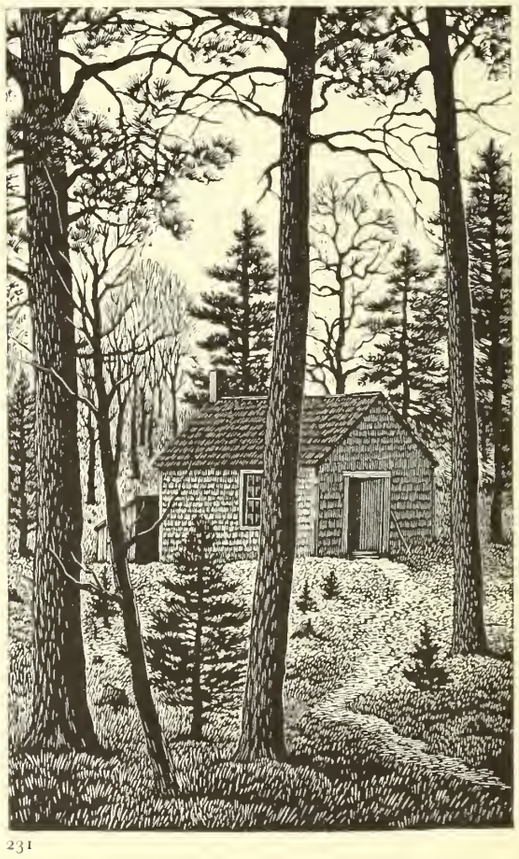

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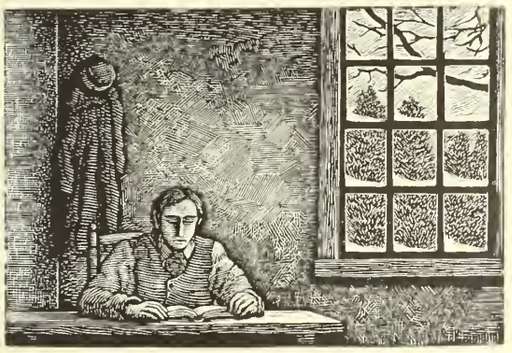

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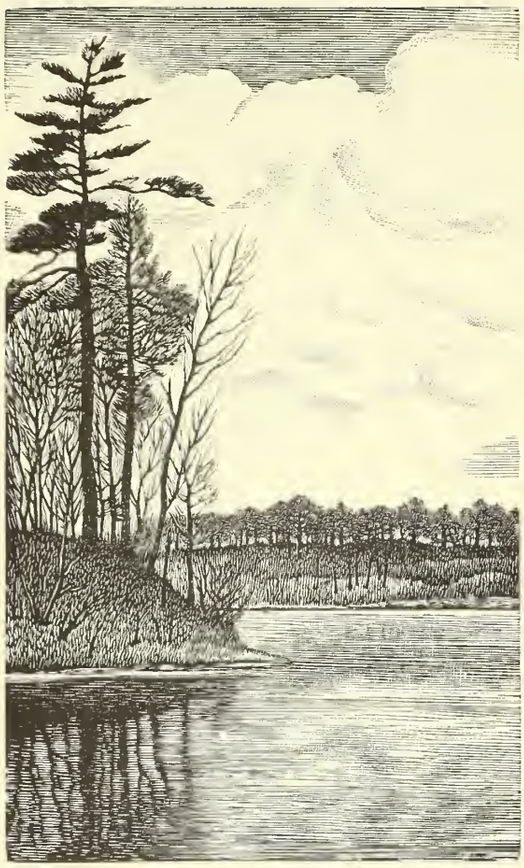

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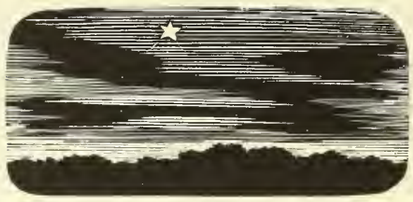

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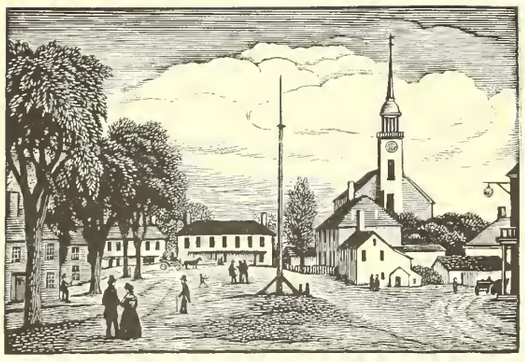

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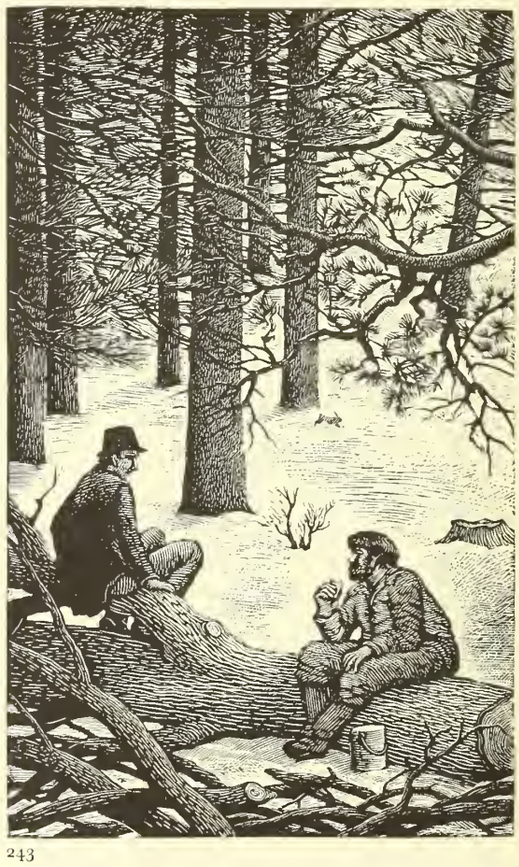

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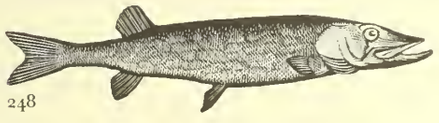
241 *Driving Cattle to Market*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 139.
242 *Morning Star*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, p. 144.
243 *Conversation*, wood engraving, 1938, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, p. 147.
244 *Hoeing Beans*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 161.
245 *Concord, 1850* (or, *The Village*), wood engraving, 1938. $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 173.
246 *Playing the Flute*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 179.
247 *Cape of Walden's Shore*, wood engraving, 1938, $5\frac{9}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 191.
248 *Pickerel*, wood engraving, 1938, $\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, p. 205.
249 *Toadstools and Ferns*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{7}{16}$, p. 207.
250 *A Catch of Fish*, wood engraving, 1938, $2 \times \frac{5}{8}$, p. 214.
251 *Fisherman*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 215.
252 *Woodchuck*, wood engraving, 1938, $\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{16}$, p. 226.
253 *Loon*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$, p. 237.
254 *Hound*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 3$, p. 240
255 *Pines*, wood engraving, 1938, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 245.
256 *Stump*, wood engraving, 1938, $\frac{3}{4} \times 2$, p. 258.



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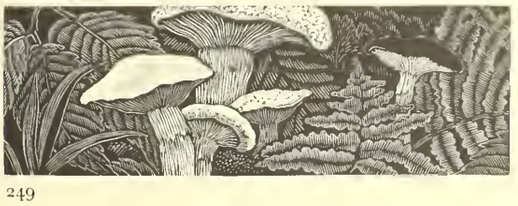

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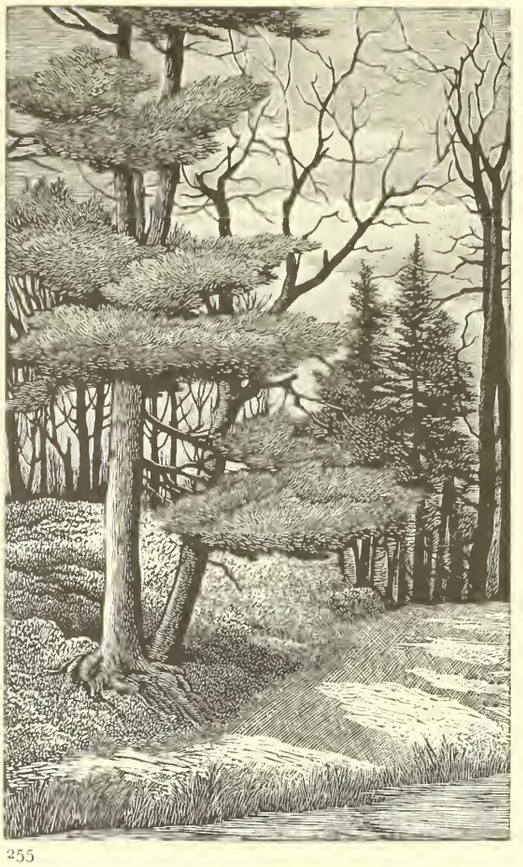

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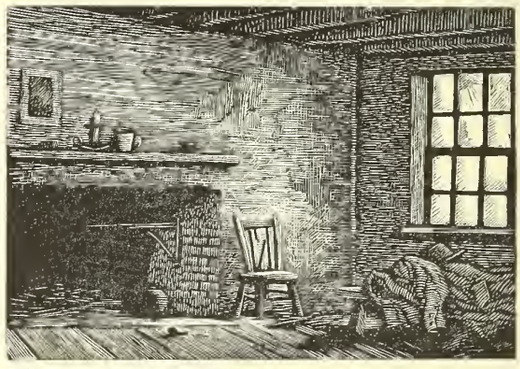

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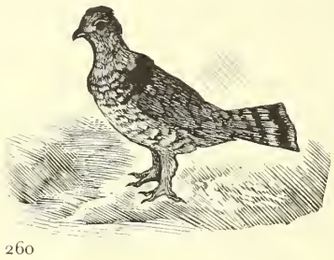

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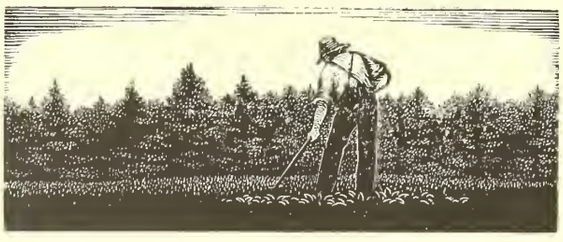
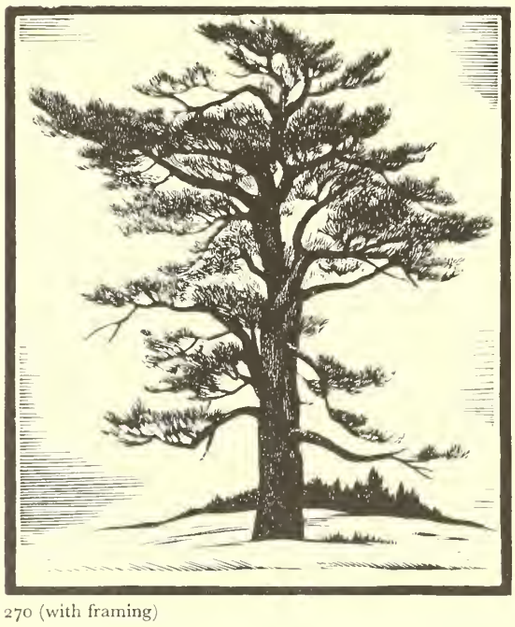


268

257 *Inside the House*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 259.
258 *Walking in the Snow*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{9}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$, p. 272.
259 *Fox in the Snow*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$, p. 278.
260 *Partridge*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{15}{16}$, p. 283.
261 *Reflections*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 285.
262 *Hauling Ice*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 295.
263 *With Favoring Winds*, wood engraving, 1938, $1 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, p. 299.
264 *Thaw on the Pond*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 301.
265 *Spring Trees*, wood engraving, 1938, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, p. 319.
266 *Song Sparrow*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{13}{16}$, p. 321.
267 "*The sun is but a morning star*," wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{13}{16}$, p. 335, concluding the *Walden* series.
268 *Hoeing*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, one known proof.
269 *Canal House*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks, black and brown), 1938, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4$, two known proofs.
270 *Pine Tree*, wood engraving, 1938, $3\frac{13}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs. There are also impressions in which the tree is framed by heavy black rules, and impressions in which the rules are not inked but are seen as a blind-stamp.



270 (with framing)

271

271 *Spring in the Poconos*, wood engraving, 1938, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$, edition of 100 for the Buck Hill Falls Art Association.

272 *Old House, Connecticut*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs.

273 *Pennsylvania Landscape* (also called *Bucks County Landscape*), chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks, black and olive), 1938, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 70.

274 *Hebron Barns*, copper engraving, 1938, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$. First state, bare foreground, few proofs. Second state, with first details in foreground and intricate detail added to roof and front wall of shed at right, 10 proofs. Third state, with much more detail in foreground and added detail throughout, edition of 60.

275 *Lyme Art Association*, wood engraving, 1938, $1\frac{5}{16} \times 3$, few proofs.

276 *Ex Libris George H. Sargent*, wood engraving. See BOOKPLATES.

277 *Ex Libris Henry Noyes Arms*, copper engraving, 1938. See BOOKPLATES.

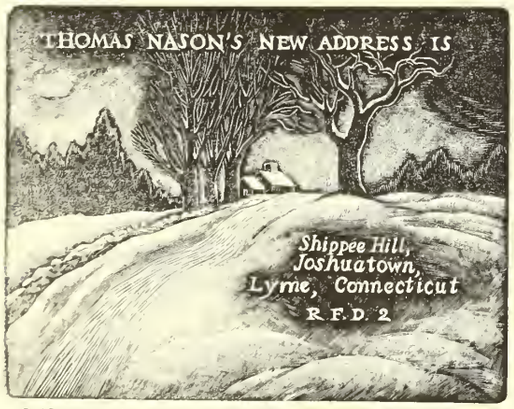
272

275

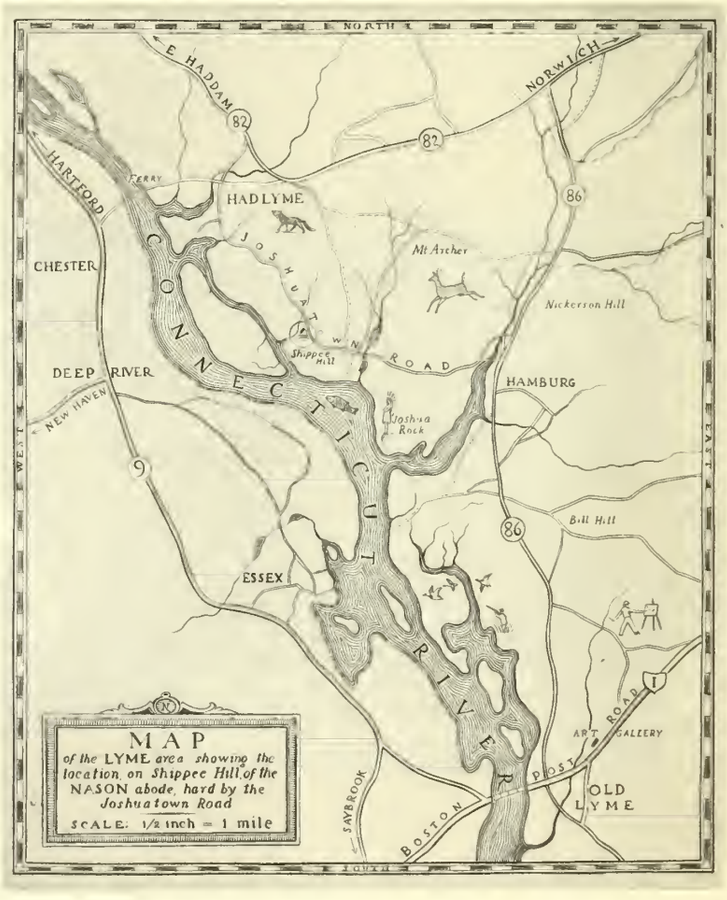
274 (first state)

273

274 (second state)



278 (first state)



279

274 (third state)

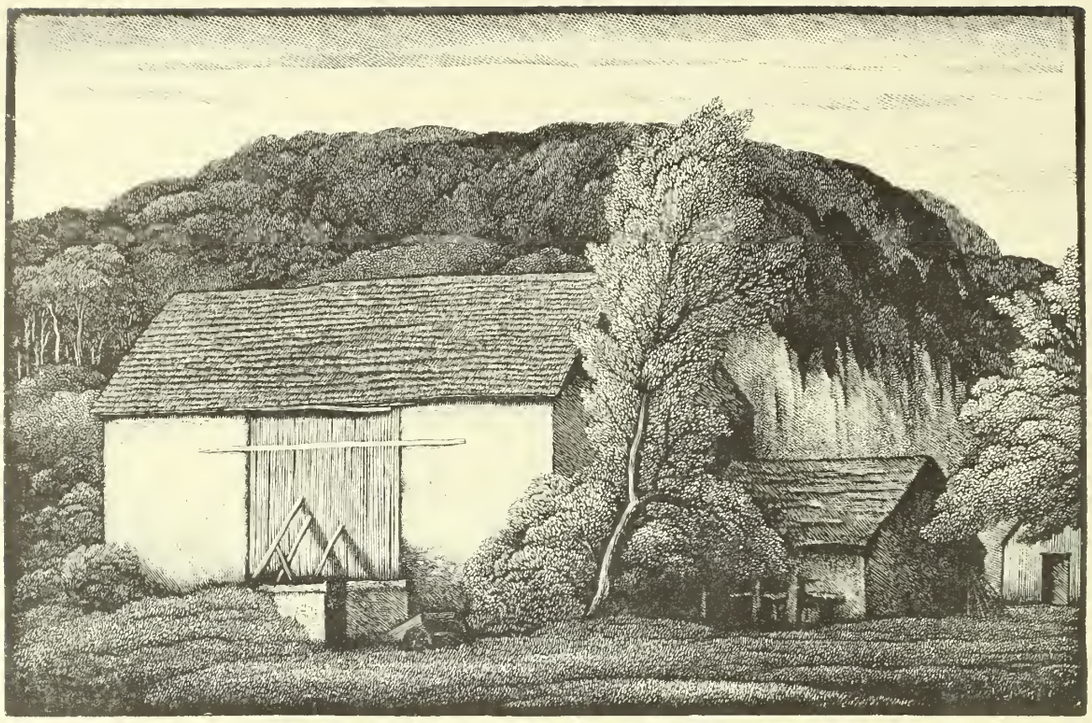
278 (second state)

280

278 *Thomas Nason's New Address. . .*, wood engraving, 1938, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 50. Second state, with the block cut down to $1\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{5}{16}$ for use in a Christmas card, edition of 50. In letterpress in the Christmas card: *Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year from Margaret and Tom Nason, Shippee Hill, Joshuatown, Lyme, Connecticut, 1938.*

279 *Map of the Lyme area*, copper engraving, 1938, $5\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{16}$, edition of 50.

280 *The Woodshed*, copper engraving, 1939, 4 × 5, few proofs.



281

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284

281 *Stone Barn, Bucks County*, wood engraving, 1939, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$, edition of 65.

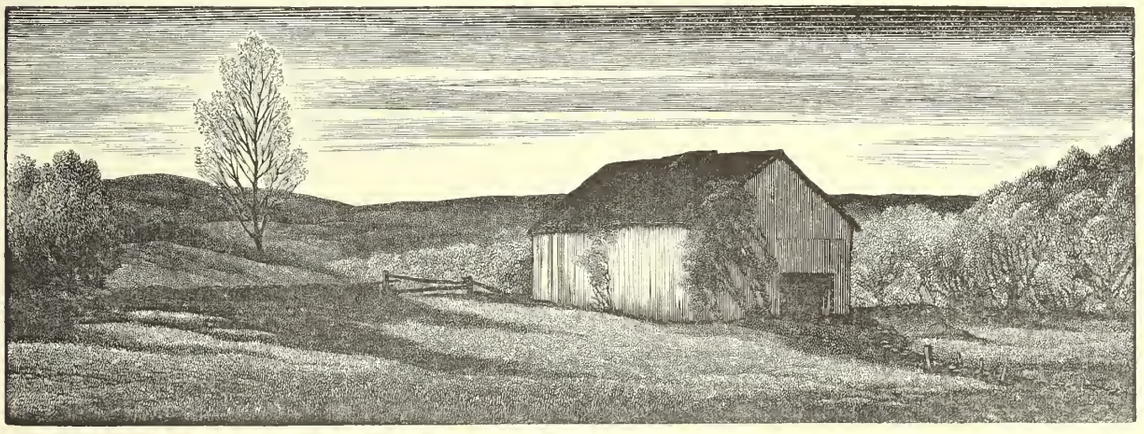
282 *Abandoned House*, wood engraving, 1939, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 10$, about 15 proofs.

283 *Barn with Cupola*, copper engraving, 1939, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, about 35 proofs.

284 *Trees along the Delaware*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks, black and olive), 1939, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 6$, edition of 75.

285 *Lengthening Shadows*, wood engraving, 1939, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.

283

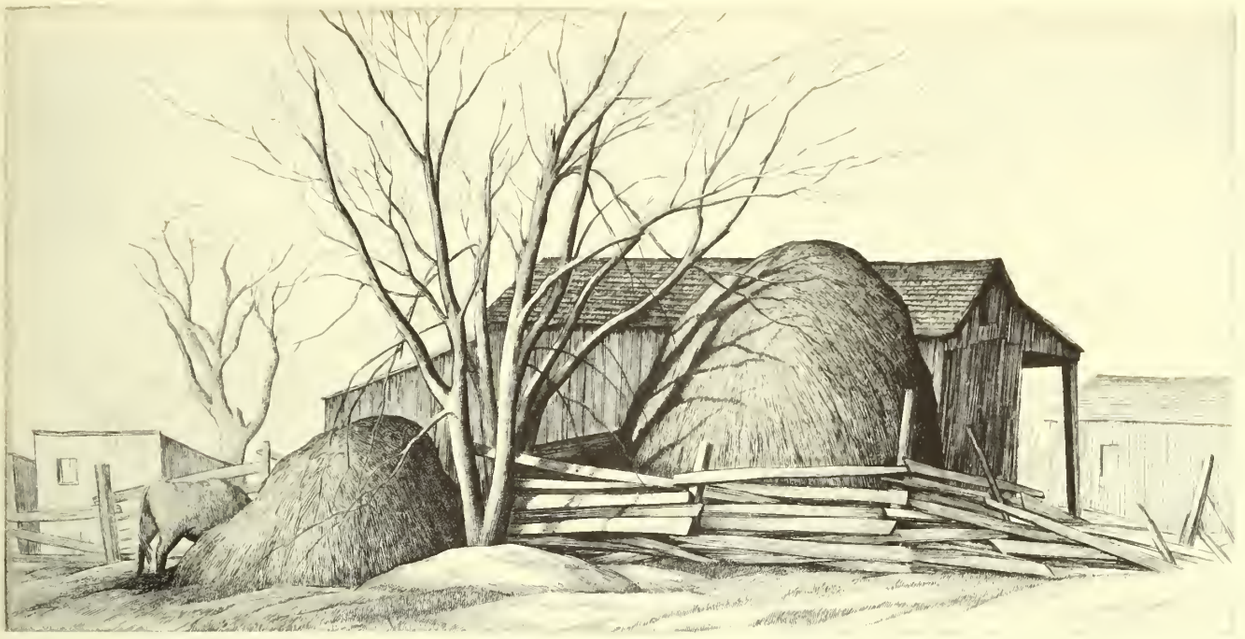


285

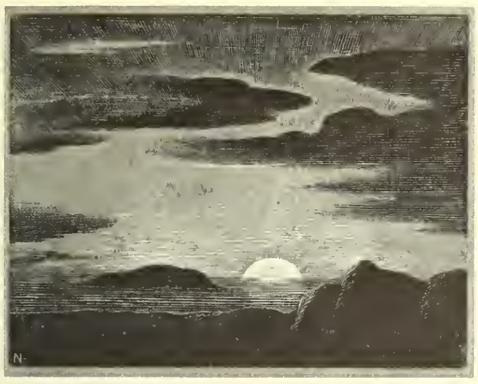
286 *Winding Road*, copper engraving, 1939, 6 × 8, edition of 125 for the New Haven Print Club.

287 *Boats, Penobscot Bay*, copper engraving, 1939, 6 × 9. A set of trial proofs in the Boston Public Library Print Department shows four stages in development of the plate. There were a few proofs of Trials 1, 2 and 3, and about 35 proofs of the fourth and final stage of the design.

286



290 (third state)



289

288 *Barns and Wooded Hillside*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and grey), 1939, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs. In addition, a large printing was made for *The Colophon*, September 1939.

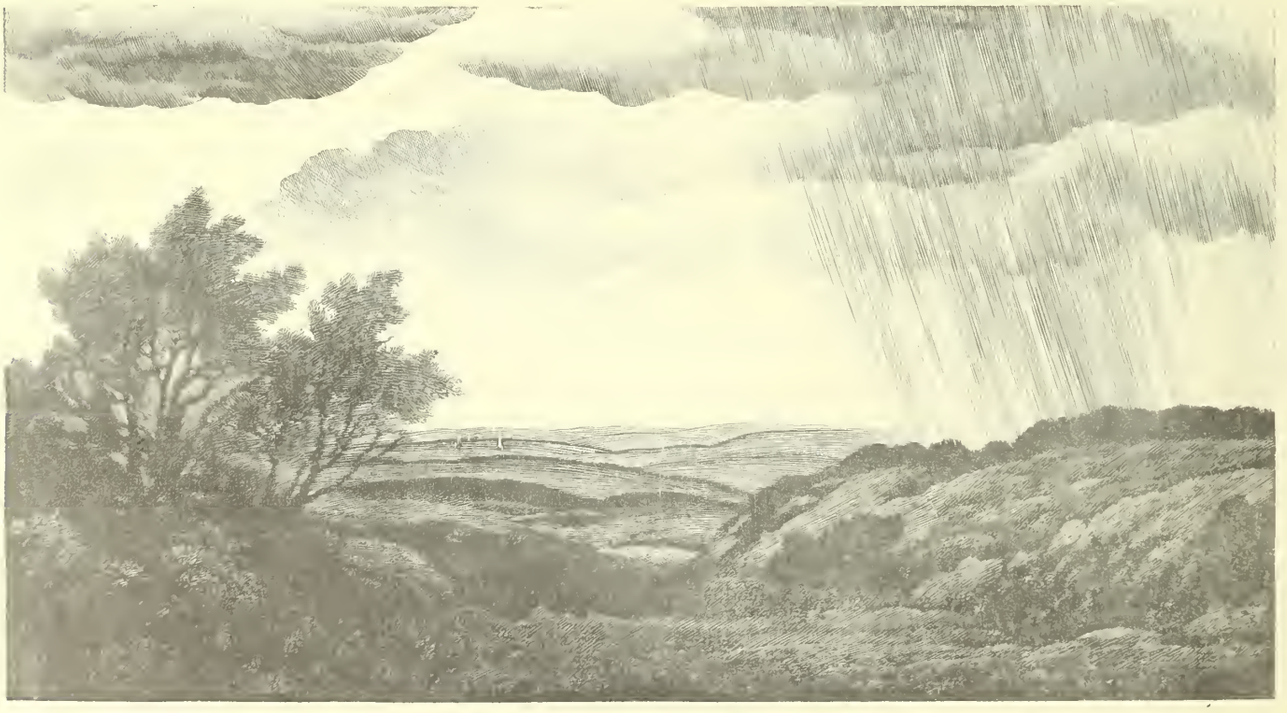
289 [Christmas card], chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, brown and blue), 1939, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{13}{16}$, edition of 50.

290 *Winter Sunlight*, copper engraving, 1940. First state, 6 × 10, cow at left in outline, few proofs. Second state, 6 × 10, cow shown with modelling and detail, tree at center defined more fully, shading on right wall of shed at left, edition of 10. Third state, 5 × 10, added foreground detail, vertical lines of boards added to wall of shed at right, and detail added to barn and other elements to deepen richness and contrast; edition of 65.

288

291 (light tint block)

291 *Summer Storm*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, grey-green, light olive), 1940, $5\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 90.



291 (middle tint block)

291 (black block)

291

292 (first working proof)

292 *The White Horse*, copper engraving, 1940, $2\frac{15}{16} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs. The Boston Public Library owns a sequence of trial proofs (here reproduced) showing the development of the plate. The artist worked over one of the proofs extensively in pencil.

292 (second working proof)

292 (proof worked over with soft pencil)

292 (last working proof)

295

293 *Berkshire Hills*, wood engraving, 1940, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 50.

294 *Hidden Farm*, wood engraving, 1940, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{5}{8}$, one known proof.

295 *Dogwood*, copper engraving, 1940, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$, demonstration plate, few proofs.

296 *Pennsylvania Farm*, copper engraving, 1940, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, one known proof.

297 *Summer Evening* (also called *Two White Horses*), copper engraving, 1940, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$, edition of 100. A signed proof shows the engraved design not quite carried to the edges of the plate at sides and top, and with a narrow panel left blank below the design. Some shadows have been engraved on the roof of the house but not on the side of the house at left. In the published state the plate has been trimmed closer to the design, with only a tiny white margin remaining within the plate mark all around (narrowest on the left side). Much added line work of a subtle kind has deepened and enriched the color of the plate, and deep shadows pattern the roof and left wall of the house.

298 *Lyme, Connecticut, Farm*, wood engraving, 1940, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 2\frac{11}{16}$, one known proof.

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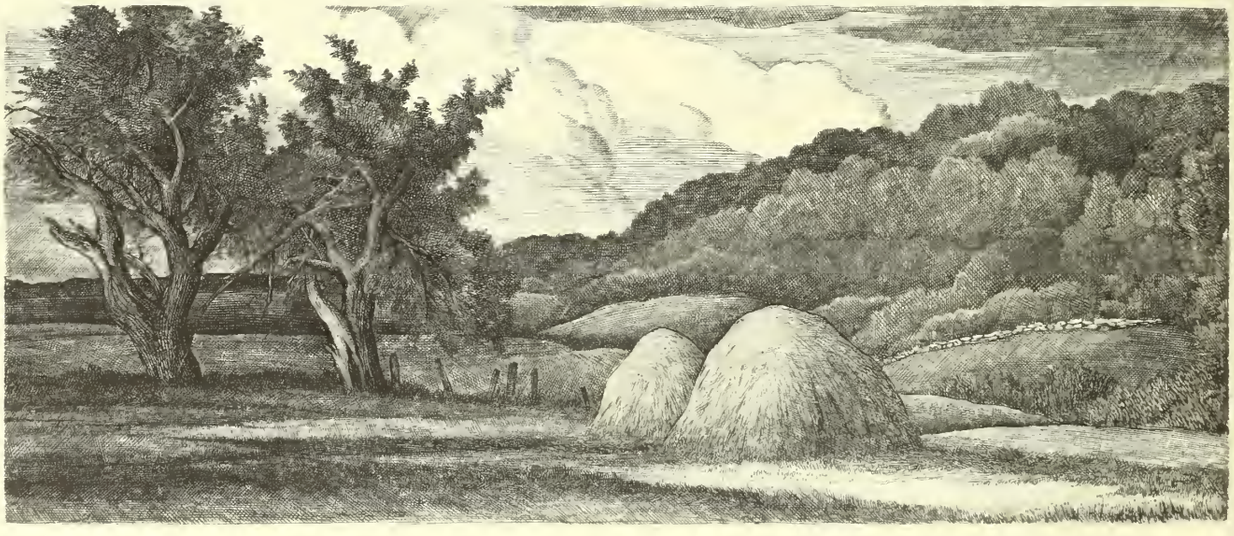
299 (first state)



299 (second state)

299 *New England Fields*, copper engraving. First state, 1940, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs. Second state, 1941, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, about 12 proofs.

300 *Eggemoggin Reach*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and grey), 1940, 6 × 10, edition of 250 for Associated American Artists.

301 *Landscape*, copper engraving, 1940, $2 \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, about 20 proofs.

302 *Woodland Stream*, copper engraving, 1940, $2 \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, about 12 proofs. See No. 201; *Woodland Stream* is the same design in reverse and in a different medium.

303 *Barn in Winter*, wood engraving, 1940, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{7}{16}$, demonstration block, about 15 proofs. See *Notes on Printing and Publishing*.

304 *Dead Tree*, copper engraving, 1940, 5 × 7, demonstration plate, few proofs.

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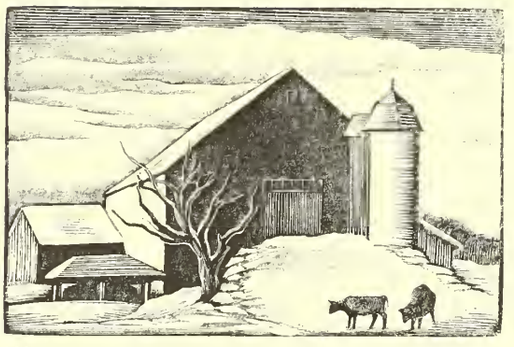
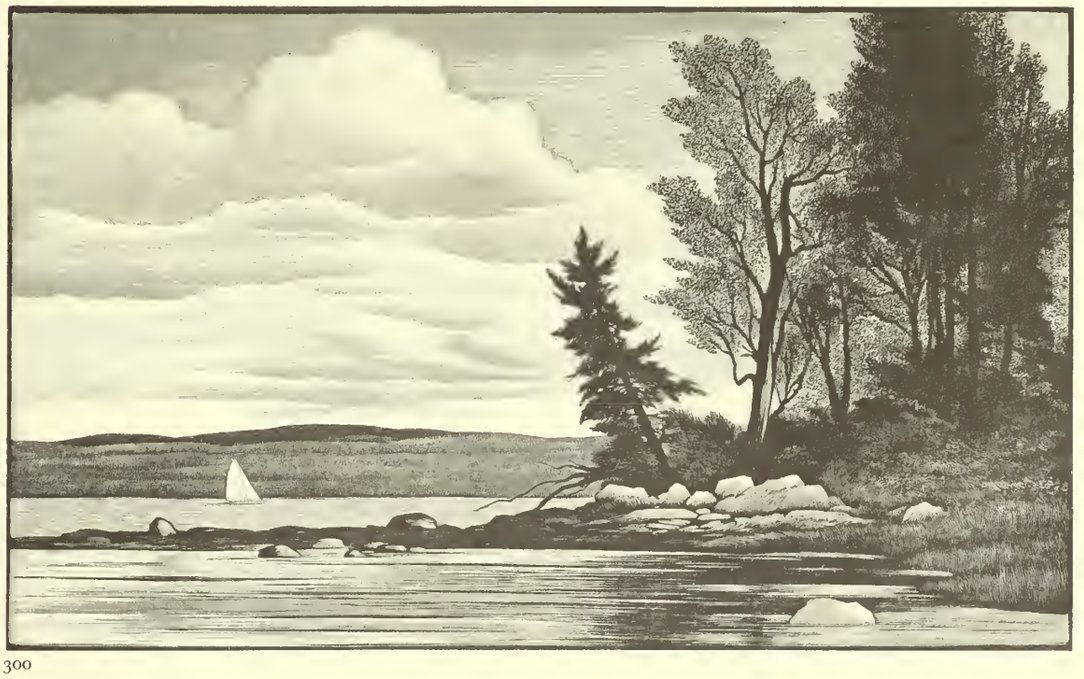


303



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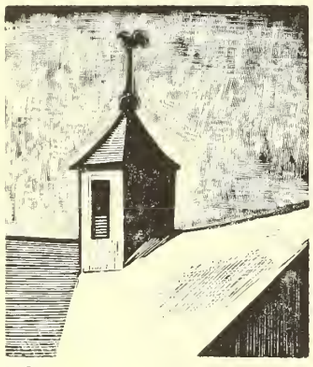

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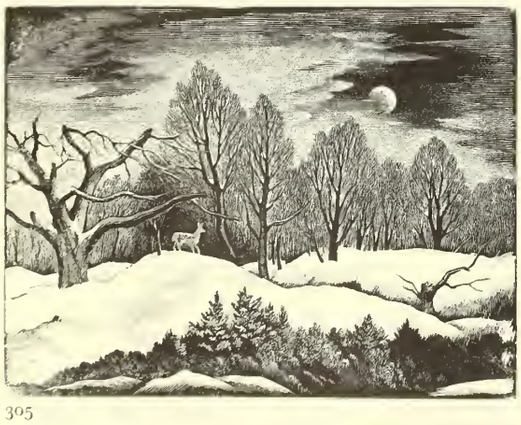


305

305 *December Evening*, wood engraving, 1940, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 5$, few proofs.

306 *Barn with Cupola and Weather Vane*, wood engraving, 1940, $2\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{13}{16}$, one known proof.

307 *Ex Libris Robert Walcott, Audubon Society of Masschusetts*, copper engraving, 1940. See BOOKPLATES.

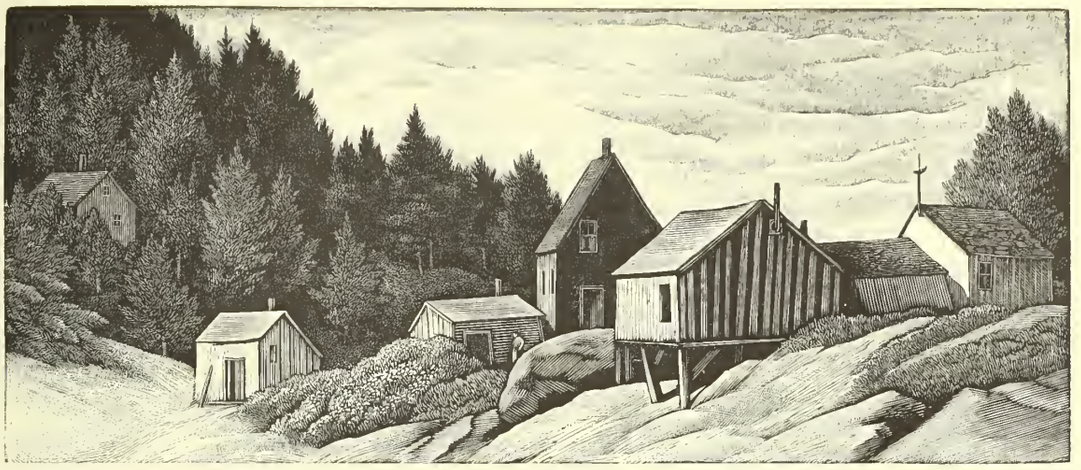
308 *Ex Libris Dr. Herman T. Radin*, etching, 1940. See BOOKPLATES.

309 *December Farm*, wood engraving, 1940, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{16}$, few proofs.

310 [Engraving a block,] wood engraving, 1941, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.

311 *Maine Fishing Village*, wood engraving, 1941, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 75.

312 *The Green Mountains*, wood engraving, 1941, $5\frac{1}{8} \times 9$, edition of 75.



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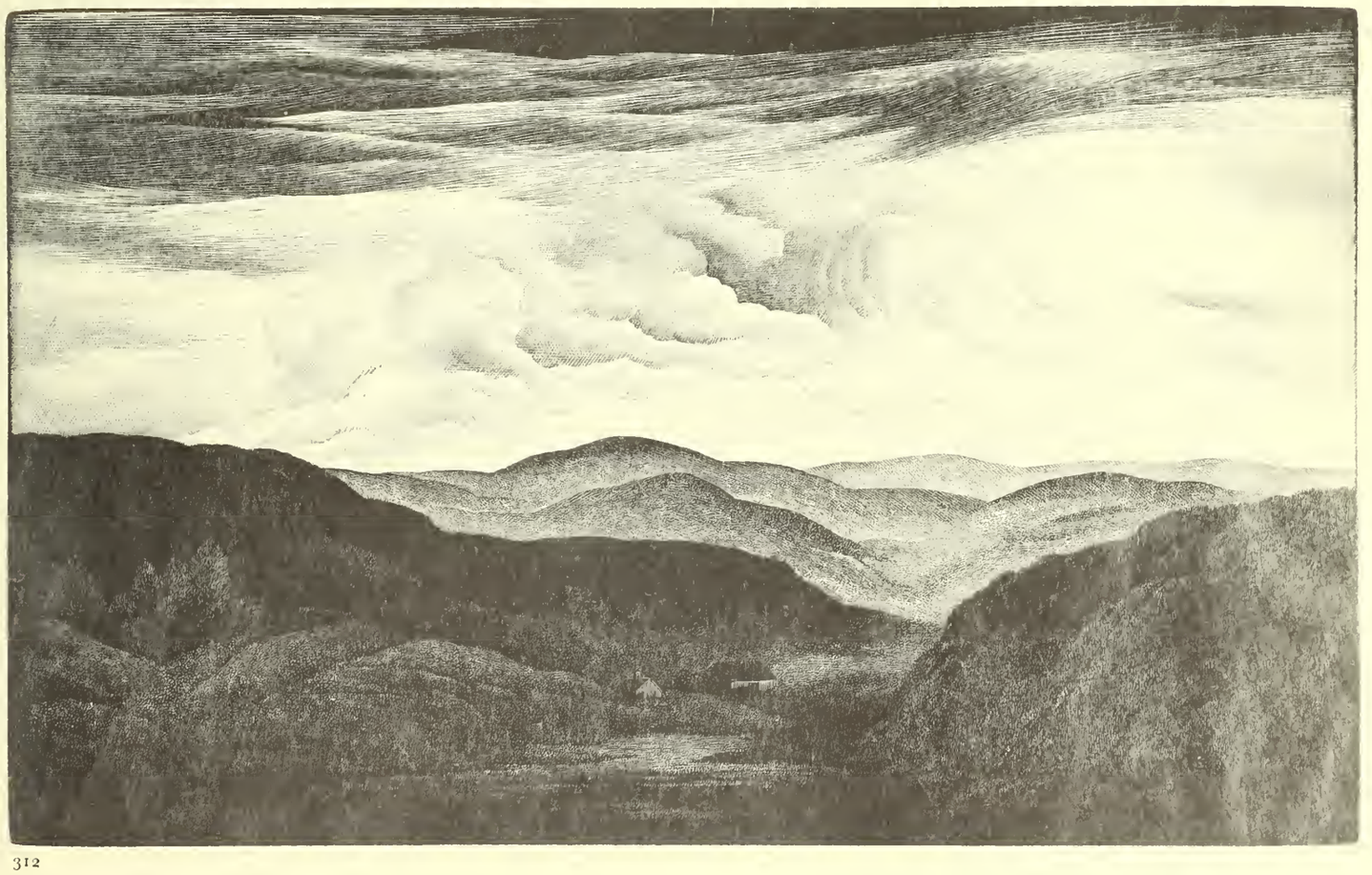


312

313 (first working proof)

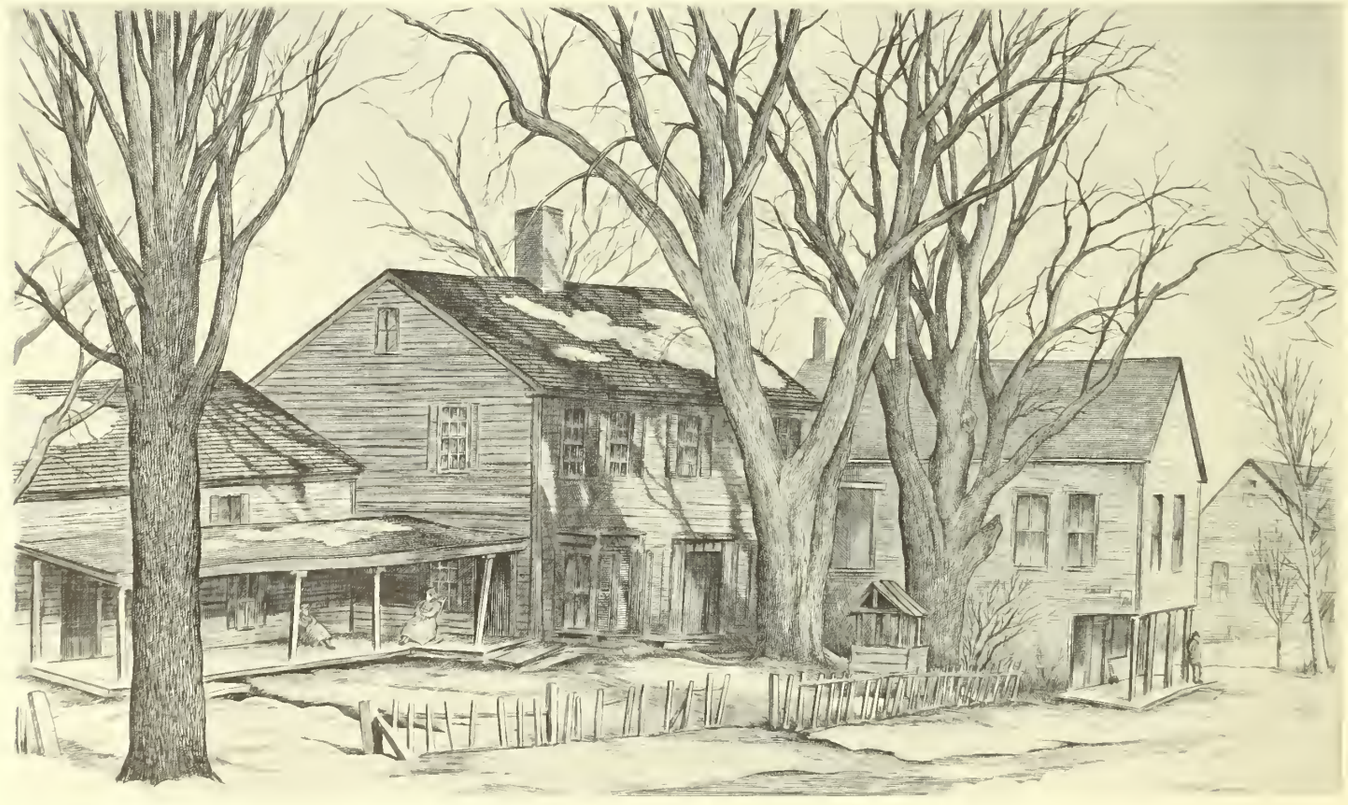
313 *March Thaw*, copper engraving, 1941, 6 × 10, about 15 proofs. A sequence of working proofs owned by the Boston Public Library is illustrated.

313 (second working proof)

313 (third working proof with seated figures in pencil)

313 (fourth working proof)

313 (fifth working proof)



313 (sixth working proof)

313

314 *Cedars*, wood engraving, 1941, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$, demonstration block, edition of 12. See No. 425.

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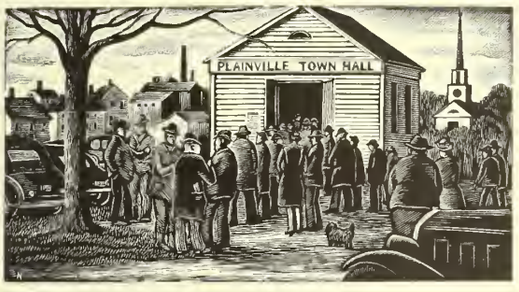

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325

315 *Passing Cannon Green*, wood engraving, 1941, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 200 for the Princeton Print Club.

316 *Melting Snow*, wood engraving, 1941, 7 × 12, edition of 20.

317 *Plainville Town Hall*, wood engraving, 1941, $2\frac{3}{16} \times 4$, few proofs.

318 *In memory of Albert Warren Stearns, Jr.*, copper engraving, 1941. See Bookplates.

319 *Ex Libris Philip S. Owen*, wood engraving, 1941. See Bookplates.

320 *Ex Libris Walter Piston*, copper engraving, 1941. See Bookplates.

321 *Gail McCarthy Owen*, copper engraving, 1941. See Bookplates.

322 *Christmas Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason*, in type, above wood engraving of cedars on snowy hillsides, 1941, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 50.

323 *Haying in Vermont*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, grey and brown), 1941, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$, edition of 50.

324 *Deer Isle, Maine*, wood engraving, 1941, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 250 for Associated American Artists.

325 *Princeton University Press*, wood engraving, 1942, $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1$, (design only), few proofs. On the proof reproduced here, the edges of the block have not been cut away and print as a black border.

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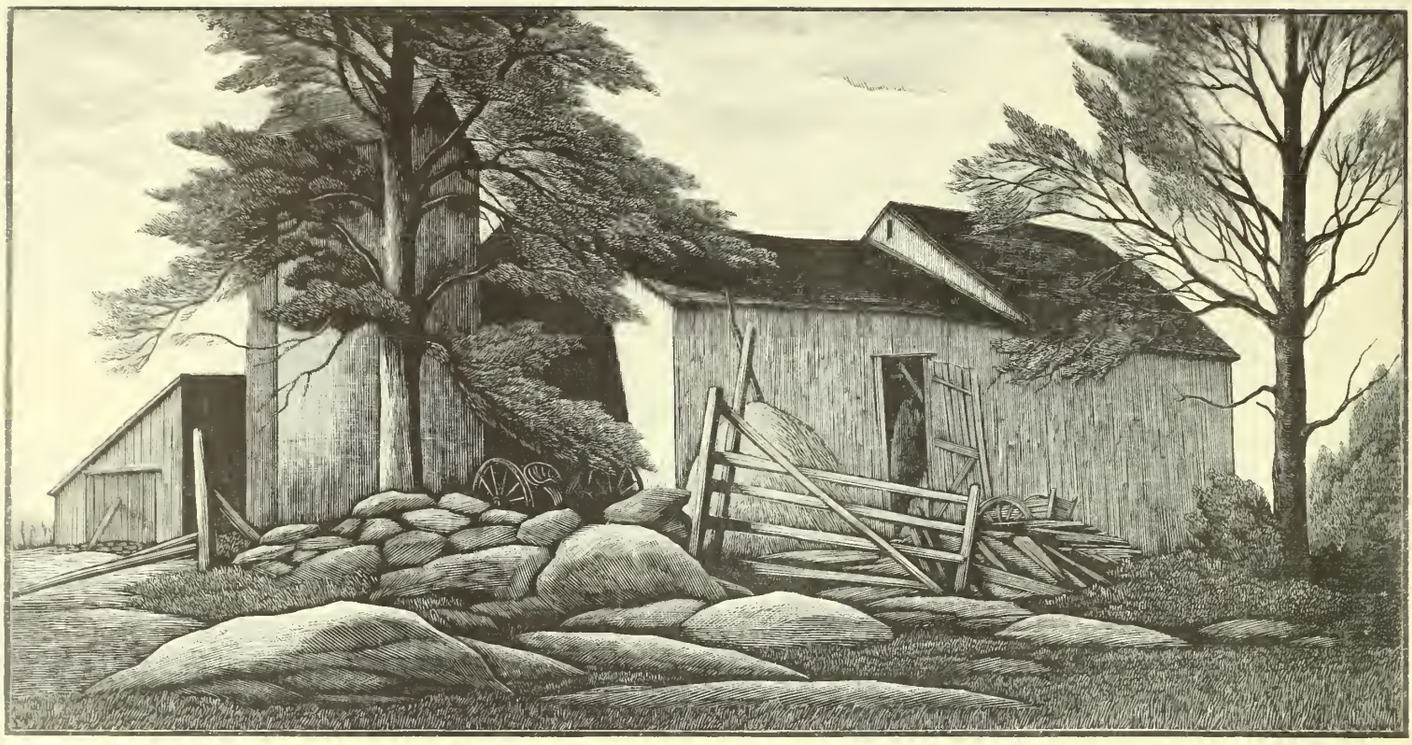
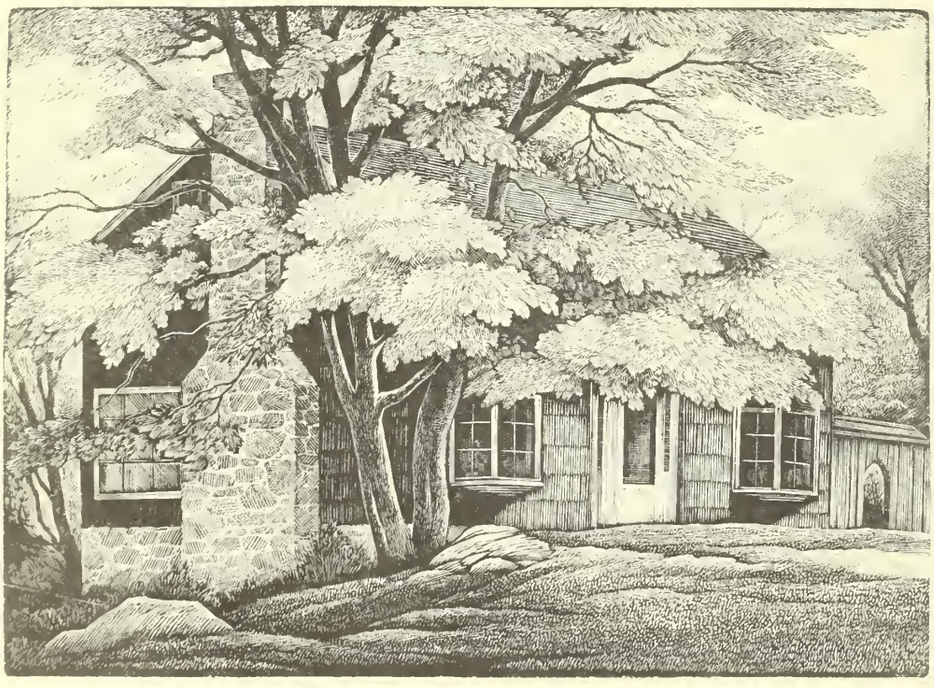


326



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327

326 *Goshen Hill Farm*, wood engraving, 1942, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 10$, edition of 60.

327 *Honey from Shippee Hill*, wood engraving, 1942, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$. See No. 205 for earlier version of this design.

328 *The Red House*, wood engraving, 1942, $4 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, about 35 proofs for Mrs. Maurice Casalis, with an additional printing of 20 in 1950.

329 *Brook in Snow*, wood engraving, 1942, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.

330 *Midsummer*, wood engraving, 1942, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 8$, edition of 300 for the Marblehead Arts Association.

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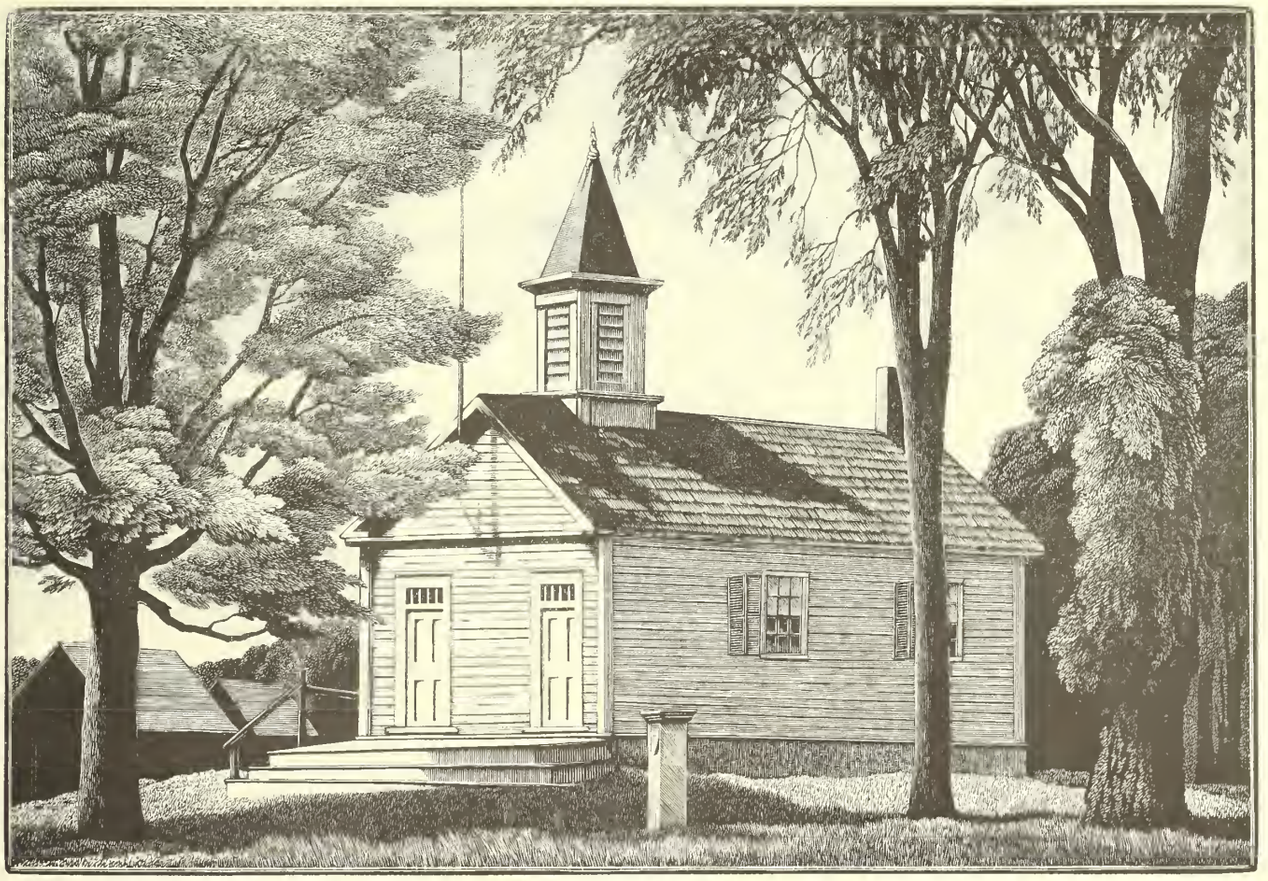
331 "*High Spruces*," Residence of R.H. Valentine, wood engraving, 1942, 5 × 10, edition of 50.

332 "*High Spruces*," wood engraving, 1942, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

333 *The District Schoolhouse*, wood engraving, 1942, 7 × 10, edition of 250 for Associated American Artists.

334 *The Hilltop*, copper engraving, 1942, 6 × 9, about 15 impressions.

335 *Evening Mist*, wood engraving, 1943, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$, edition of 75.



333

336

336 (trial proof)

336 *The Silo*, copper engraving, 1943, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 10$, edition of 60. A trial proof, $7\frac{7}{8} \times 11\frac{5}{8}$, known in a single impression reproduced here, shows the initial design of the plate, which the artist then cut down and reworked.

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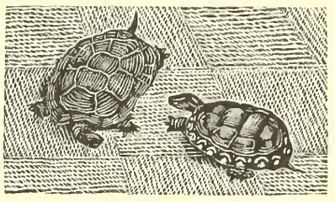

349

337 *Fish*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs. This print and the wood engravings which follow, ending with a headpiece, *Accent on Living*, were commissioned by *The Atlantic Monthly*. (See entries, overleaf.)

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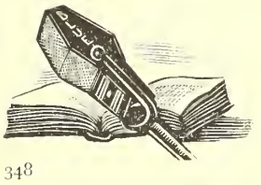

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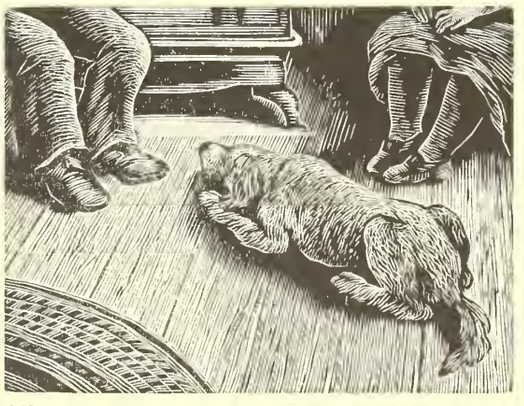

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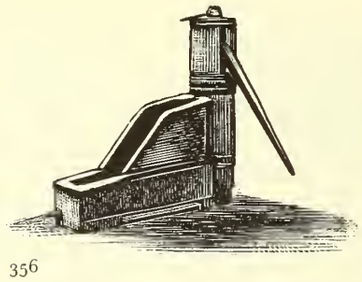
338 *River*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.
339 *Dogwood in Blossom*, wood engraving, 1943, $\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs. See No. 295.
340 *Beside the Stove*, wood engraving, 1943, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 3$, few proofs.
341 *Victory Garden*, wood engraving, 1943, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 3$, few proofs.
342 *Apple and Strawberries*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.
343 *Turtle and Flowers*, wood engraving, 1943, $\frac{13}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.
344 *Tree*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.
345 *Closet and Turtle*, wood engraving, 1943, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 3$, few proofs.
346 *Radio Announcer*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs.
347 *Setting the Dial*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{5}{16} \times 1\frac{13}{16}$, few proofs.
348 *Microphone and Book*, wood engraving, 1943, $1 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.
349 *Two Turtles*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{15}{16}$, few proofs.
350 *Kerosene Lantern*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{3}{16} \times \frac{11}{16}$, (lantern only), few proofs.
351 *Dish of Fruit*, wood engraving, 1943, $\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.
352 *Vase*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.
353 *Bread and Bean Pot*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.
354 *Accent on Living*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.
355 *Massachusetts Hall, Harvard*, wood engraving, 1943, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{16}$, edition of 100.



356

356 *The College Pump*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.
357 *The Boathouse*, wood engraving, 1943, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$, demonstration plate, about 15 proofs. See No. 422.
358 *Butterfly*, copper engraving, 1943, $4\frac{7}{8} \times 6\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs.
359 [Seal of the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art], copper engraving, 1943 (size of the original copperplate, to the plate mark, $3\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$), few proofs.
360 *Fruit Tree*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$, one known proof.
361 *A New England House*, wood engraving, 1943, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$, two known proofs.

358

355

362 (working proof)

362 (proof worked over in soft pencil)

363

362 *Country Lane*, copper engraving, 1943, $7\frac{5}{16} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$, unfinished. A working proof and a proof heavily worked over in pencil are reproduced here.

363 "*Twin Brooks*," wood engraving, 1943, 6 × 10, edition of 60 for Arthur Allen.

364 "*Tantem Farm*," wood engraving, 1943, 6 × 10, about 50 impressions for Mrs. Maurice Casalis.

364

367

365 [Christmas card], wood engraving, 1943, $4\frac{3}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$, about 50 impressions.

366 *Near Lyme, Sunset*, wood engraving, 1944, $7 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 209 for the Woodcut Society.

367 *Country Road*, wood engraving, 1944, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10$. First state, with tone (partly parallel lines, partly cross-hatching) in sky, 10 proofs. Second state, with tone cut away to leave white in much of the sky at left, 9 proofs. Third state, with subtle lightening of tone in parts of sky at center and left, and with parallel lines replacing the solid black of states I and II on the near wall of the house, edition of 75.

368 *The Millsite*, etching and engraving on copper, 1944. There are a few proofs of the plate ($3\frac{11}{16} \times 3$, to the plate mark) with a bare sky and, below the design, an open panel. The plate was then cut down to $3 \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ (see reproduction). From the finished plate, with lines added in the sky at the upper corners, 15 proofs were taken.

369 *Harvard Hall*, wood engraving, 1944, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, edition of 20.

365

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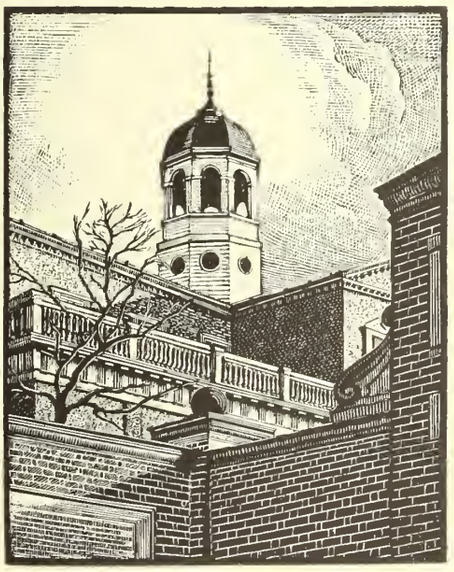

369

368 (proof)

373

371

370 *The Cider Mill*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, grey, olive), 1944, 7 × 10, four known proofs.

371 *Rural Letter Box*, wood engraving, 1944, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs, commissioned to illustrate a Christmas printing by The Spiral Press of Robert Frost's poem, *An Unstamped Letter in Our Rural Letter Box*.

372 *North Plain Meadow*, copper engraving, 1944, $5 \times 7\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 25.

373 *The Farm*, copper engraving, 1944, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 20.

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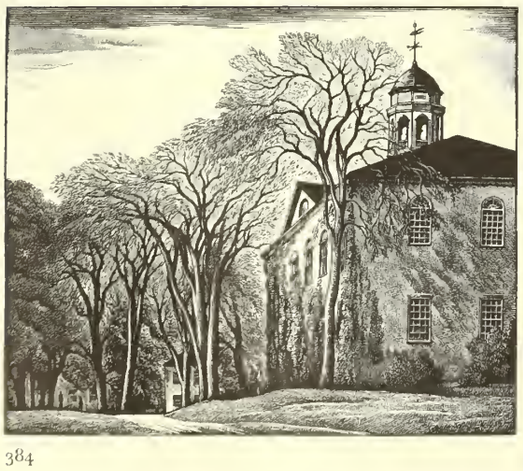

384

374 *Yale University Library. Discovery and Settlement of Western North America. Collection of William Robertson Coe*, type within border of wood engravings, 1944. See BOOKPLATES.

375 [Yale University School of Divinity Library], wood engraving, 1944. See BOOKPLATES.

376 *Michael B. Cordon*, copper engraving, 1944. See BOOKPLATES.

377 *Connecticut Valley Farm*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and olive), 1945, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{11}{16}$, edition of 85. (Reproduced on p. 149.)

378 *Berkshire Farm*, copper engraving, $3\frac{1}{16} \times 4$. Nason began the plate in 1945, took it up again, two decades later, and completed it in 1966. See No. 610, where the print is reproduced.

379 *Feeding the Chickens* (also called *Dorothy Feeding the Chickens*), copper engraving, 1945, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 8$, about 50 proofs.

380 *Building the Stack*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and olive), 1945, 8×12, 7 proofs pulled by the artist. Also, 100 impressions were printed by a commercial printer. The artist judged these "not very successful." See No. 539.

381 *Ex Libris Patris C.A. Cordon*, wood engraving, 1945. See BOOKPLATES.

382 *Pearson Hall*, wood engraving, 1945, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 5\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs. First of a series of eight prints for Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

383 *Doorway, Bulfinch Hall*, wood engraving, 1946, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

384 *Bulfinch Hall*, wood engraving, 1946, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs.

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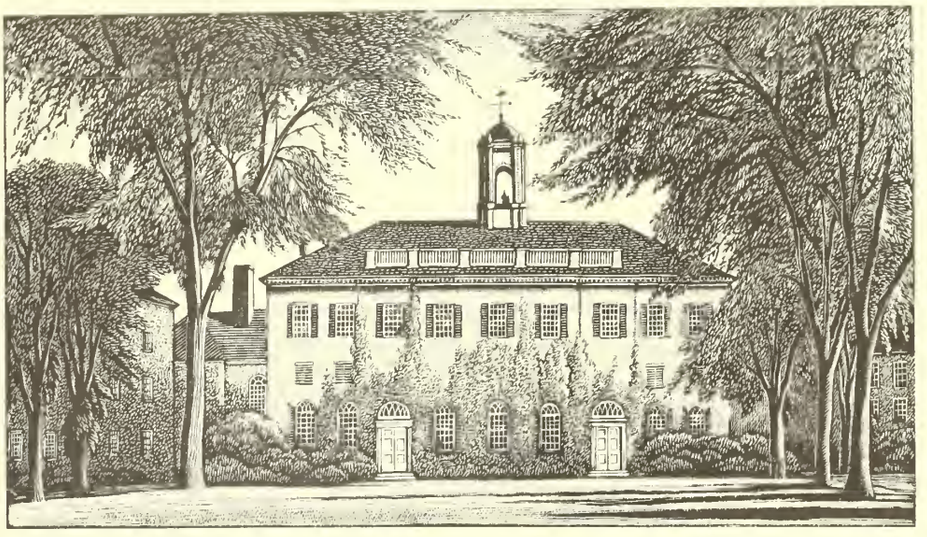

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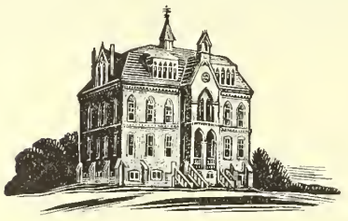

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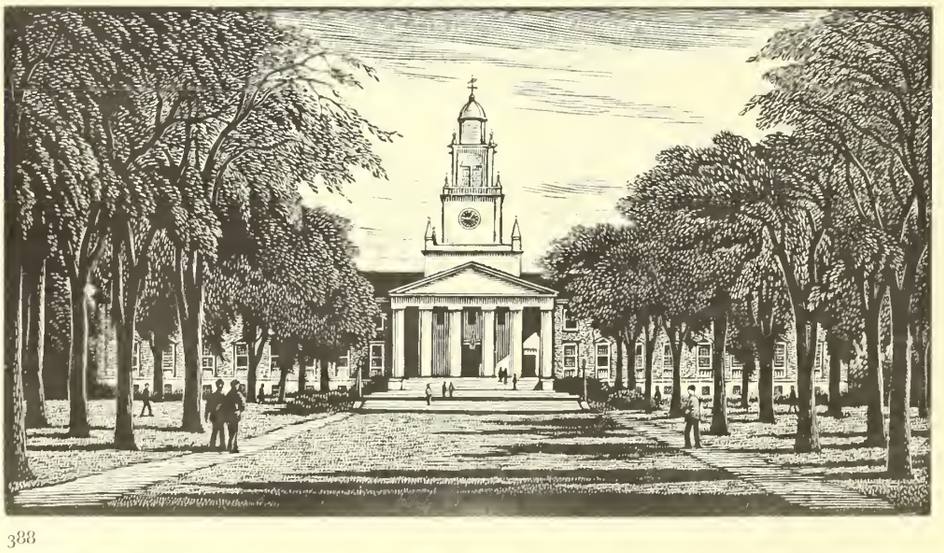

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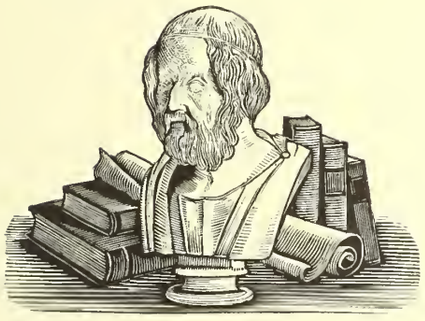

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390

385 *Old Academy Building, 1865–1922*, wood engraving, 1946, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2$, few proofs.

386 *Stone Chapel, 1876, of the Andover Theological Seminary*, wood engraving, 1946, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs.

387 *Bust of Homer*, wood engraving, 1946, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

388 *Samuel Phillips Hall*, wood engraving, 1946, $3 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

389 *Cochran Church*, wood engraving, 1946, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

390 *The Hay Barn*, copper engraving, 1946, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 250 for the Miniature Print Society.

391 *The Lonely Farm*, wood engraving, 1946, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 8$, edition of 100 for the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts.

392 *Skating*, a Christmas card, wood engraving, 1946, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{16}$. The block was engraved with an outer frame; proofs exist with the frame uninked and printing as a a blind-stamp. In these, the inked, printed picture measures $1\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{7}{8}$. A single proof in color was printed, as an experiment, in brown, yellow, red, and orange, with a brick-red border.

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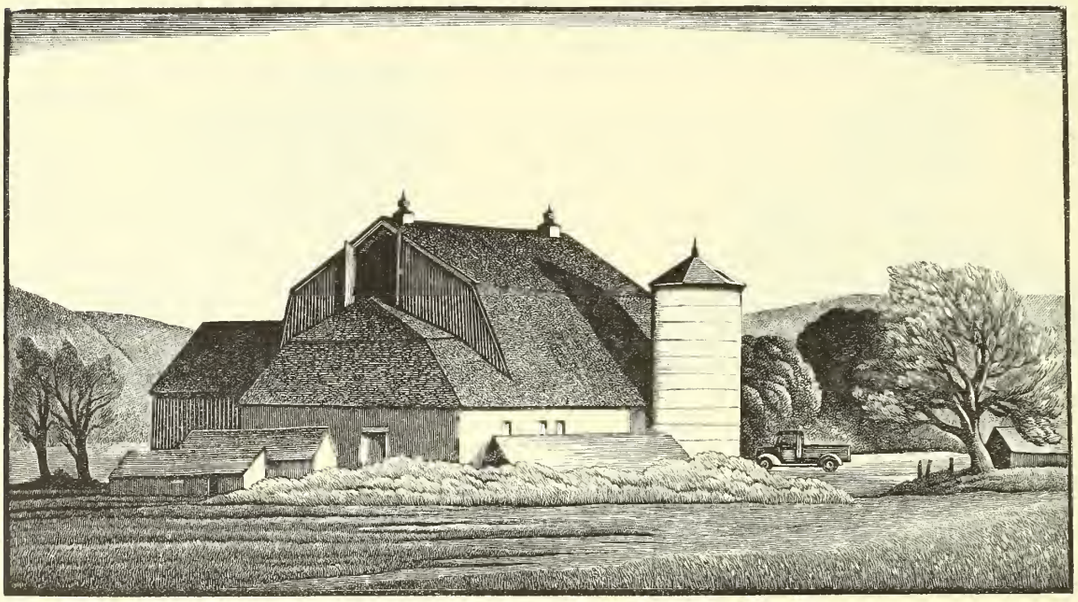


393 (black block)

393 (olive block)

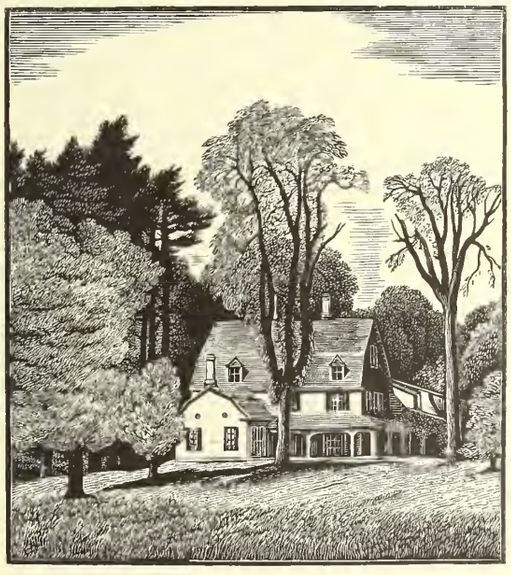
394

393 *The Gambrel-Roofed Barn*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two colors, the black printed from a wood block, the olive printed from a copper plate), 1947, $5\frac{5}{8} \times 10\frac{3}{16}$, edition of 70 on thin Japan vellum and 20 on thick vellum. Finding it difficult to obtain boxwood blocks, the artist decided to experiment with the printing of a tint from copper.

394 *Bonnet Hill Farm*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and brown), $5\frac{3}{8} \times 9$. Black block only: 10 impressions for Monroe Dreher in 1947. Chiaroscuro: 100 impressions for Monroe Dreher in 1949. See No. 423.

395 *William Cullen Bryant*, from a painting by Samuel F. B. Morse in 1825, wood engraving, 1947, $5\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs. First of a series illustrating *The Poems of William Cullen Bryant*, issued by The Limited Editions Club in 1947 and in a less expensive edition by The Heritage Press in the same year.

396 *The Bryant Homestead at Cummington*, wood engraving, 1947, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{16}$, p. 2.



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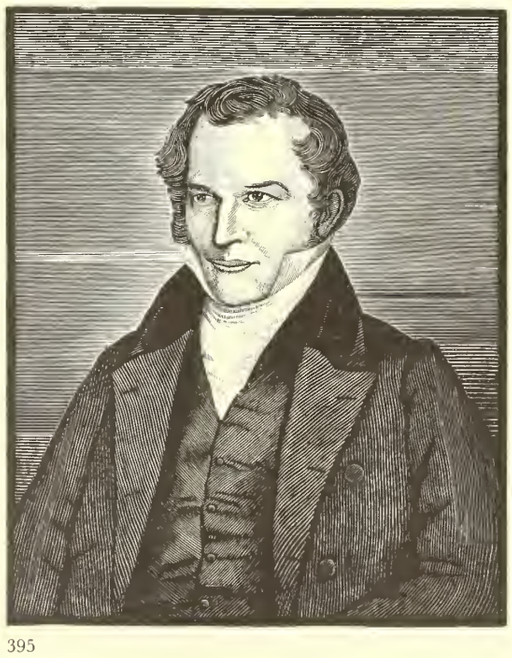

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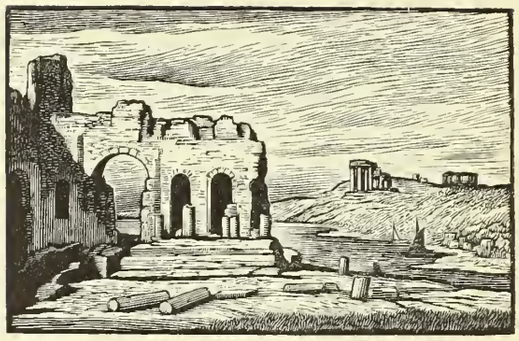

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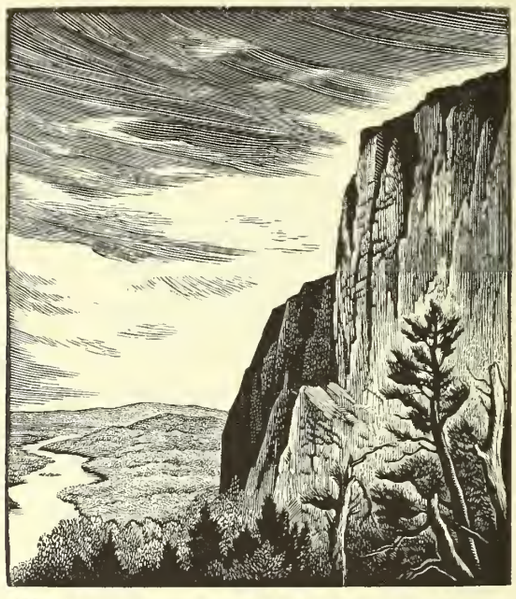

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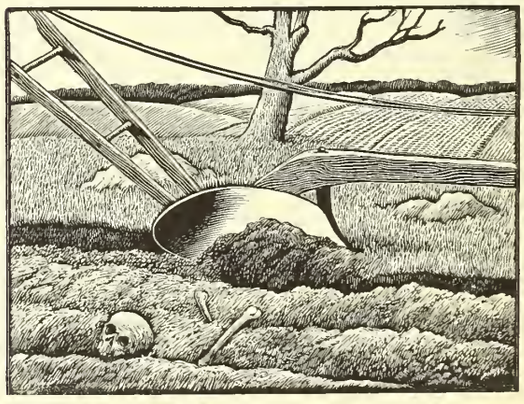

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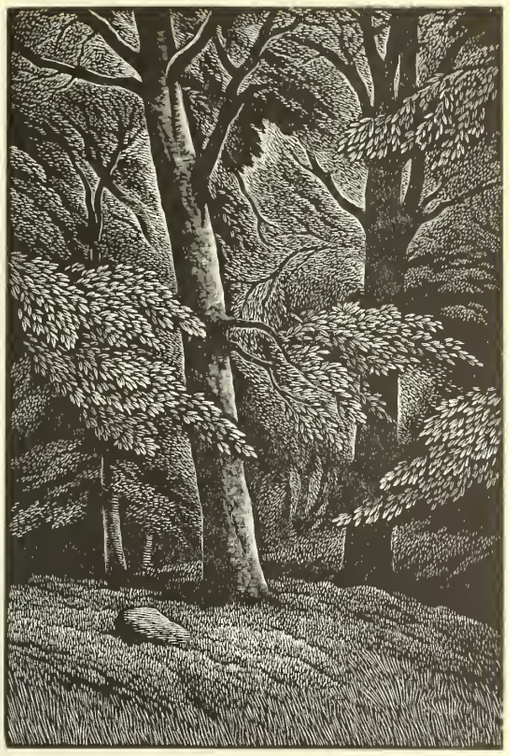

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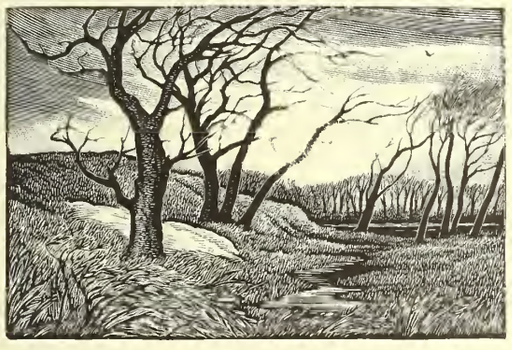

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397 *Thanatopsis*, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{16}$, p. 11.
398 *The Yellow Violet*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 4$, p. 14.
399 *The Rivulet*, wood engraving, 1947, 2×4, p. 23.
400 *To a Waterfowl*, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{1}{16} \times 4$, p. 26.
401 *The Ages*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 4$, p. 43.
402 *A Walk at Sunset*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4$, p. 53.
403 *Monument Mountain*, wood engraving, 1947, $4\frac{9}{16} \times 4$, p. 56.
404 *An Indian at the Burial-Place of His Fathers*, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{1}{16} \times 4$, p. 66.
405 *A Forest Hymn*, wood engraving, 1947, $6 \times 4\frac{1}{16}$, p. 73.
406 *The Death of the Flowers*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{11}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$, p. 79.
407 *The New Moon*, wood engraving, 1947, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 4$, p. 89.
408 *The Two Graves*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 4$, p. 92.
409 *The Prairies*, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{3}{16} \times 4$, p. 102.
410 *To the Fringed Gentian*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{15}{16} \times 4$, p. 119.

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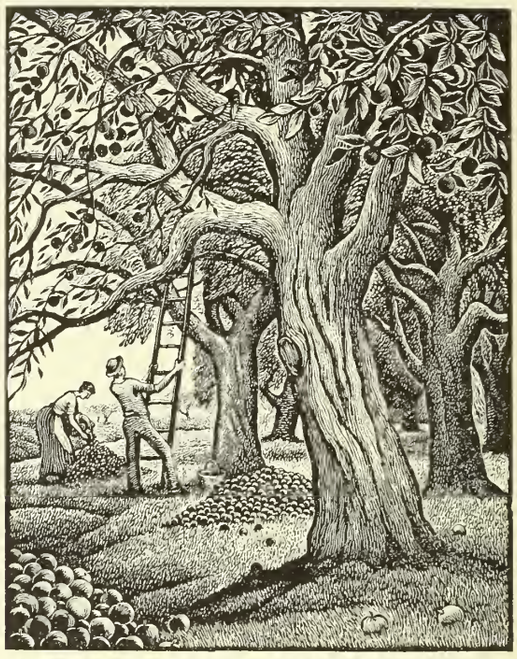

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411 *The Hunter of the Prairies*, wood engraving, 1947, 3 × 4, p. 129.
412 *A Presentiment*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{15}{16}$ × 4, p. 132.
413 *The White-Footed Deer*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{5}{8}$ × 4, p. 141.
414 *The Planting of the Apple-Tree*, wood engraving, 1947, $5\frac{1}{8}$ × 4, p. 162.
415 *My Autumn Walk*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{7}{16}$ × $4\frac{1}{16}$, p. 179.
416 *Robert-of-Lincoln*, wood engraving, 1947, 3 × 4, p. 192.
417 *The Song of the Sower*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{7}{8}$ × 4, p. 212.
418 *Among the Trees*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{13}{16}$ × 4, p. 222.
419 *A Legend of the Delawares*, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{1}{16}$ × 4, p. 231.
420 *Ode to Connecticut River*, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{1}{2}$ × 4, p. 292, concluding the Bryant series.
421 *The Sheepfold*, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{1}{16}$ × $7\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 100.

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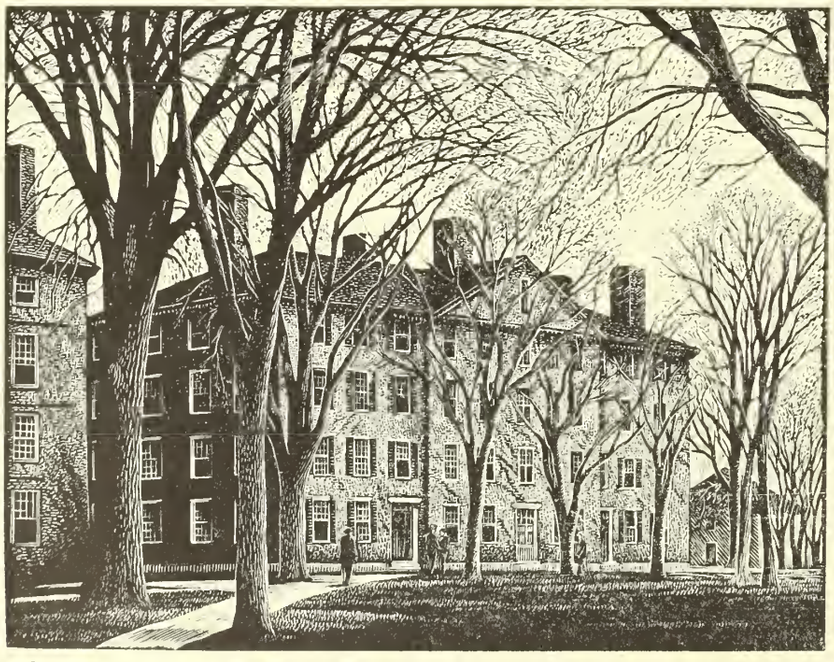

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422

422 *Burnt Cove*, wood engraving, 1947, 6 × 8, edition of 65. See No. 357, *The Boathouse* (1943), an earlier, smaller version of the design.

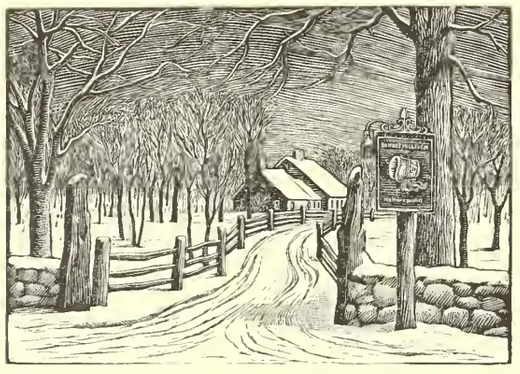
423 *Bonnet Hill Farm*, Christmas card, wood engraving, 1947, $3\frac{1}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$, edition of 100 for Monroe Dreher. An earlier view of the house is No. 394.

424 *Amston Pond*, copper engraving, 1947, $6\frac{7}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 250 for the Society of Print Connoisseurs, plate cancelled.

425 *Winter Sunrise*, Christmas card, wood engraving, 1947, $2\frac{3}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs. An earlier version of the design is No. 314, *Cedars* (1941).

426 *Stoughton Hall*, wood engraving, 1948, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs.

427 *New England House*, wood engraving, 1948, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 7$, edition of 100.



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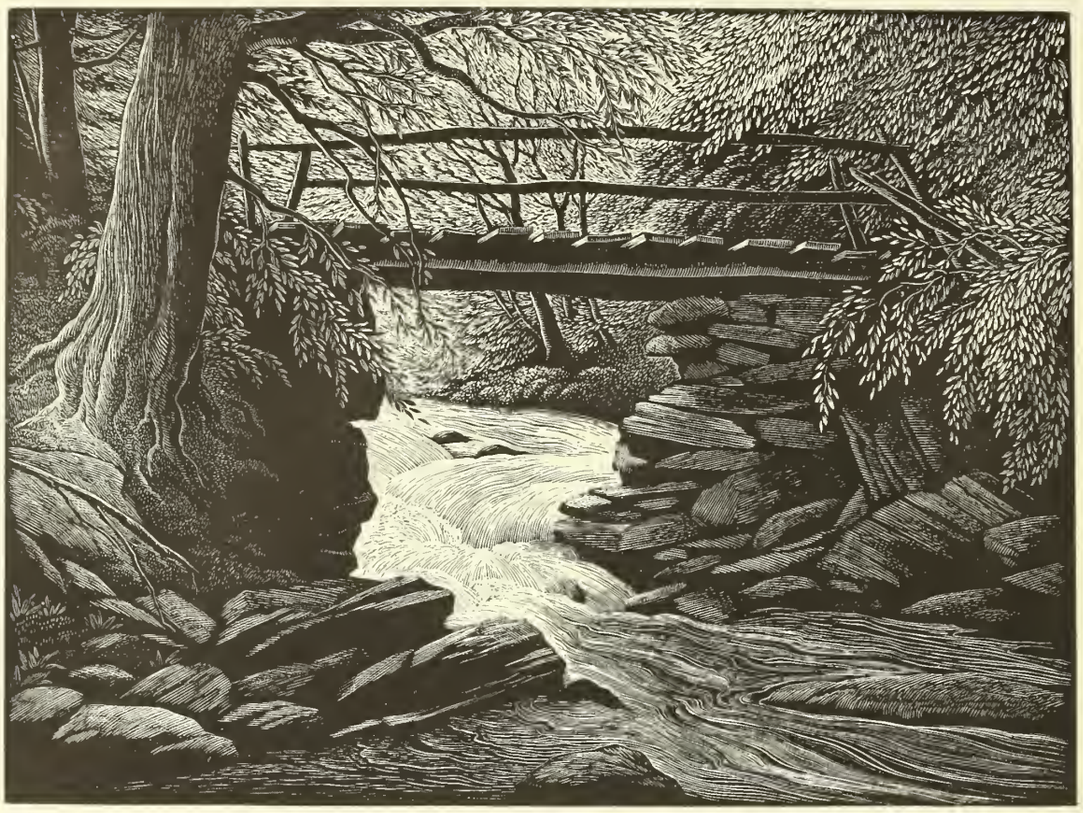

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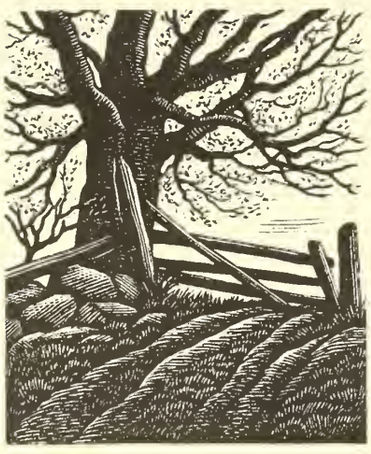

431

428 *Mountain Stream*, wood engraving, 6 × 8. First state, 1948, about 10 proofs: woods and rocks contain detailed white-line work but still form dark shadow. Second state, 1949, edition of 85: much new white-line work, adding light to foliage, foreground rocks at left and trunk of tree on the bank and conveying a sense of brightness at the top center beyond the bridge.

429 *Resting*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and olive), 1948, $4\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.

430 *Acorns*, wood engraving, 1948, $\frac{5}{8} \times \frac{7}{8}$, few proofs, commissioned as decoration in a Christmas printing by The Spiral Press of Robert Frost's poem, *Closed for Good*.

431 *Fence and Gate*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs, commissioned as above.

432 *November*, copper engraving, 1948, 8 × 11, edition of 25.

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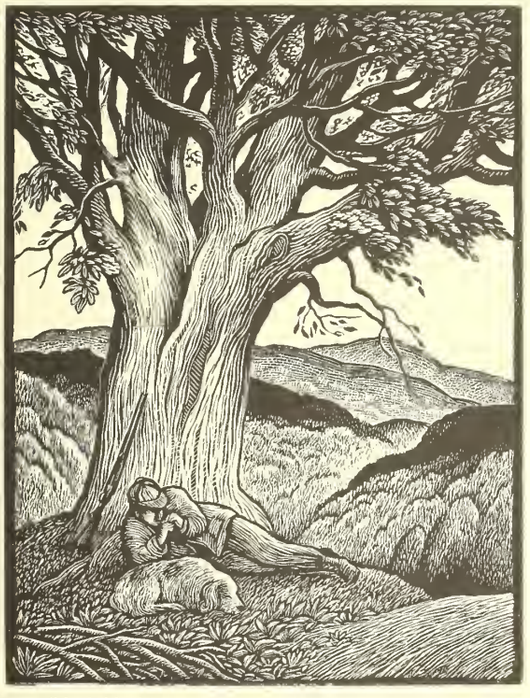
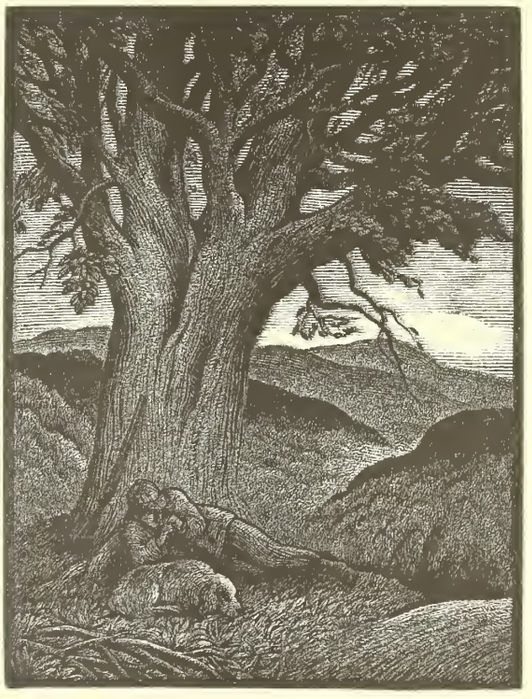


429 (black block)



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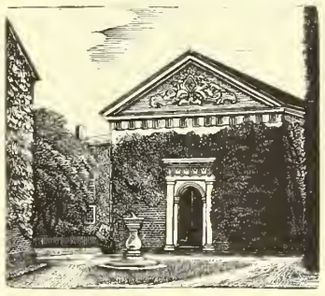

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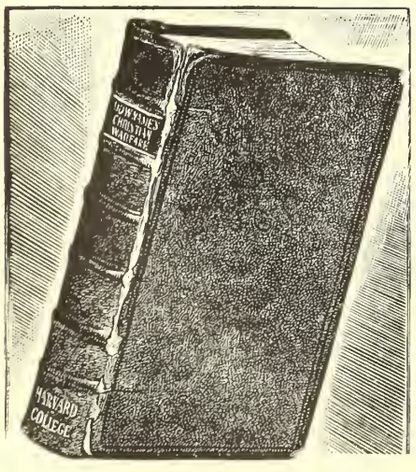

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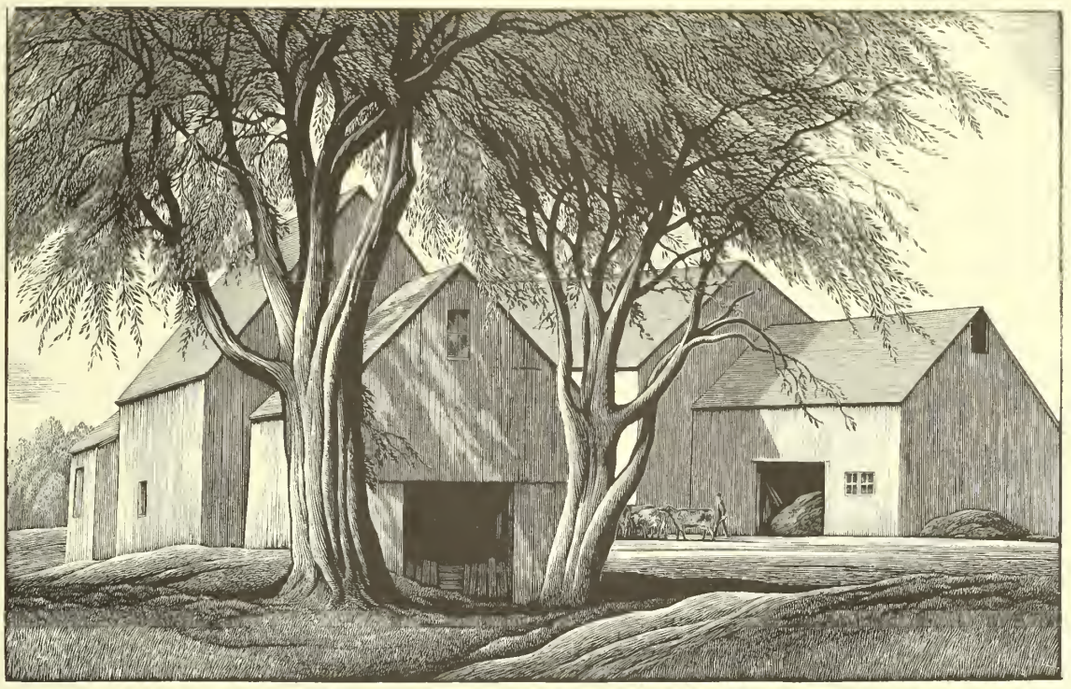

445

433 *View in the Yard*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

434 *The John Harvard Chapel, Southwark Cathedral*, wood engraving, 1948, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.

435 *John Harvard's Chambers in Emmanuel College*, wood engraving, 1948, $1\frac{15}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.

436 *John Harvard's Book*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{11}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.

437 *Old Gore Hall Library*, wood engraving, 1948, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.

438 *Holden Chapel*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

439 *Hollis Hall*, wood engraving, 1948, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

440 *Wadsworth House*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

441 *The Whittier Homestead*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs, commissioned by Houghton, Mifflin Company for use on the dust jacket of *John G. Whittier* by John A. Pollard.

442 *Kenyon College Library. The Angling Collection of Charles C. Wright*, type and wood engraving, 1948. See Bookplates.

443 *Ex Libris Lorimer B. Slocum*, wood engraving, 1948. See Bookplates.
[*Ex Libris Catherine P. Cordon*, 1948. See No. 381 (Bookplates).]

444 *Yale University Library. Charles McLean Andrews Memorial Collection of American Colonial History*, chiaroscuro wood engraving, with type, 1948. See Bookplates.

445 *The Four Gables*, wood engraving, 1949, $7\frac{5}{8} \times 12$, edition of 50.

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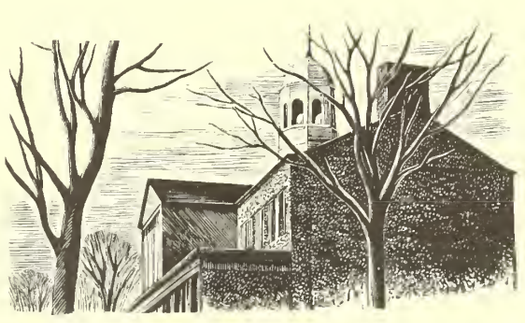

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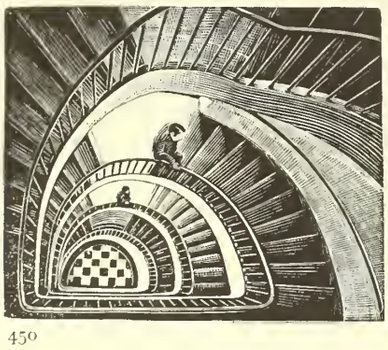

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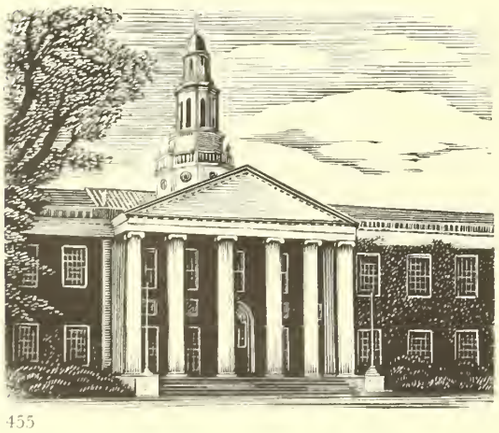

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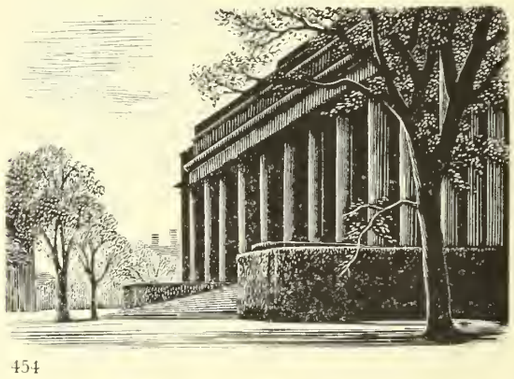

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146 *Round Hill* (also called *Distant Shower*), copper engraving and etching, 1949, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 13$, about 20 proofs. A sequence of trial proofs shows seven steps in the development of the plate. The fifth of these steps, with sky bare except for indications of clouds above the horizon at right, and detail still to be added in the lower left corner, is signed by the artist, and there are four proofs on white paper.

447 *Sundial, Massachusetts Hall*, wood engraving, 1949, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

448 *Doorway of Wadsworth House*, wood engraving, 1949, $1\frac{9}{16} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.

449 *Lowell House Tower*, wood engraving, 1949, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{13}{16}$, few proofs. There are also proofs with a round arched frame which begins at the left and right edges of the design, above the engraved lines in the sky, and curves over the tower. Nos. 449–458 and No. 463 were commissioned to illustrate the book *Education, Bricks and Mortar*, published by Harvard in 1949.

450 *Littauer Center Staircase*, wood engraving, 1949, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.

451 *Memorial Chapel*, wood engraving, 1949, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

452 *Fogg Museum Courtyard*, wood engraving, 1949, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

453 *Langdell Facade*, wood engraving, 1949, $2\frac{7}{16} \times 1\frac{11}{16}$, few proofs.

454 *Widener Library*, wood engraving, 1949, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$, few proofs.

455 *Baker Library*, wood engraving, 1949, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs.

456 *Statue of John Harvard*, wood engraving, 1949, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.

457 *Laboratory Interior*, wood engraving, 1949, $2\frac{7}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$.

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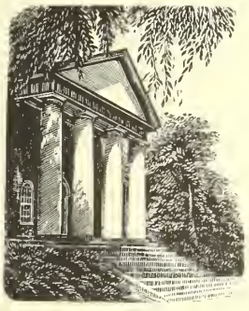

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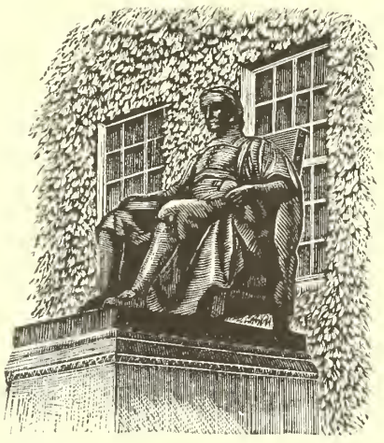

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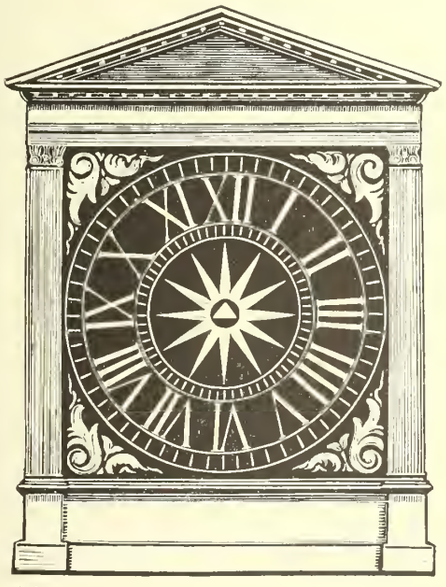

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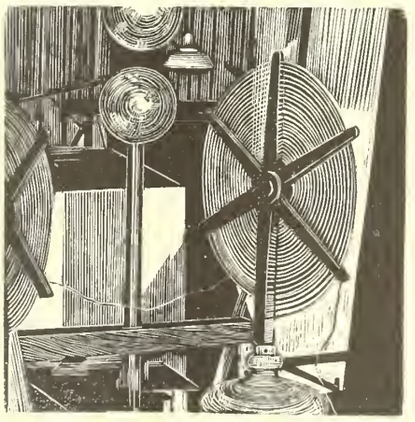

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458 *Dunster House*, wood engraving, 1949, $1\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{9}{16}$, few proofs.

459 *Lamont Library*, pen drawing, 1949, see BOOKPLATES.

460 *John Taylor Arms*, copper engraving, 1949, $9\frac{15}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, about 8 proofs.

461 *Farmyard, Evening*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (three blocks: black, gray, and brown), 1949, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$, edition of 70.

462 *Haystacks*, wood engraving, 1949, $6\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 350 for Associated American Artists.

463 *Massachusetts Hall*, wood engraving, 1949, $7\frac{3}{4} \times 5$, few proofs.

464 *Ex Libris William S. Ladd*, wood engraving, 1949. See BOOKPLATES.

465 *The Stephen Crane Collection of James J. Wolf at Lafayette College*, copper engraving, 1949. See BOOKPLATES.

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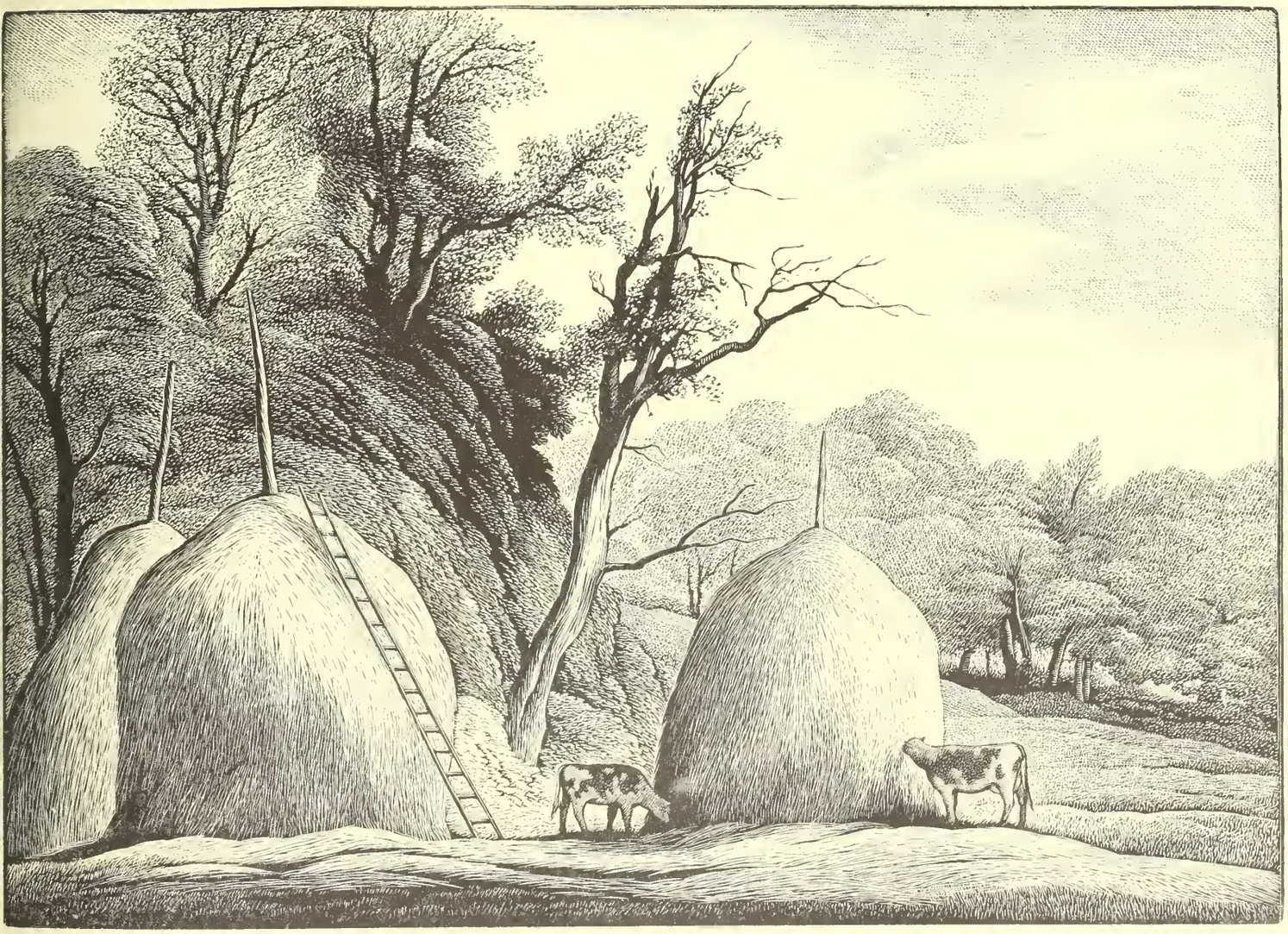

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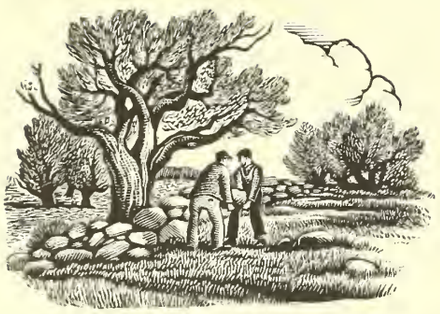

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466 *Winter Landscape*, copper engraving, 1949, $3\frac{7}{16} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs.

467 and 468 *Merry Christmas*, two wood engravings together, 1949, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{5}{16}$, few proofs. Proofs exist of the picture, measuring $5 \times 4\frac{5}{16}$, without the woodcut lettering, which is a separate block. Of the Christmas card, some impressions are entirely in black, while in others the picture block (No. 467) is printed in black and the lettering (No. 468) in red.

469 *Winding Road*, wood engraving, 1950, $2\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$. First of a series of eleven prints commissioned as decorations in *The Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: The Limited Editions Club, 1950), 2 volumes, this vignette was used on the title page of Volume I.

470 *Old Tree*, wood engraving, 1950, $2 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, p. 3.

471 *Mending Wall*, wood engraving, 1950, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{16}$, p. 43.

472 *Two Roads*, wood engraving, 1950, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{16}$, p. 133.

473 *The Grindstone*, wood engraving, 1950, $2 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, p. 203.

474 *Cutting Wood*, wood engraving, 1950, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, title page, Vol. II.

475 *West-running Brook*, wood engraving, 1950, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$, p. 309.

476 *Barns*, wood engraving, 1950, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, p. 355.

477 *Thrush*, wood engraving, 1950, $2 \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, p. 435.

478 *A Young Birch*, wood engraving, 1950, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2$, p. 495.

479 *Evening Star*, wood engraving, 1950, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, p. 537.

467 and 468

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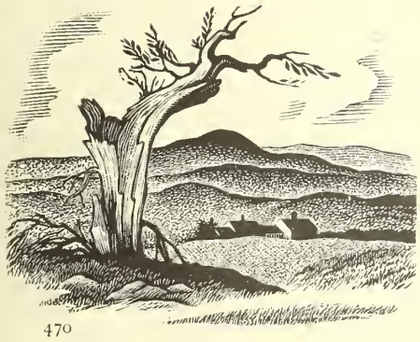

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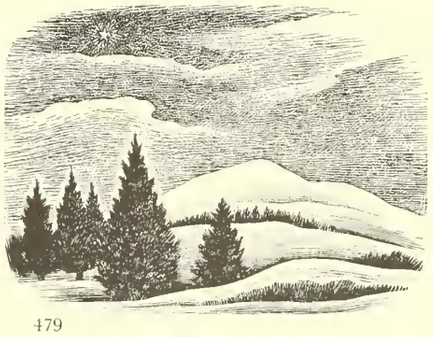

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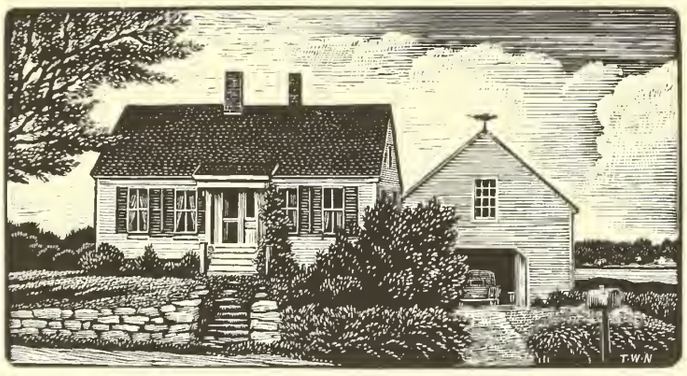

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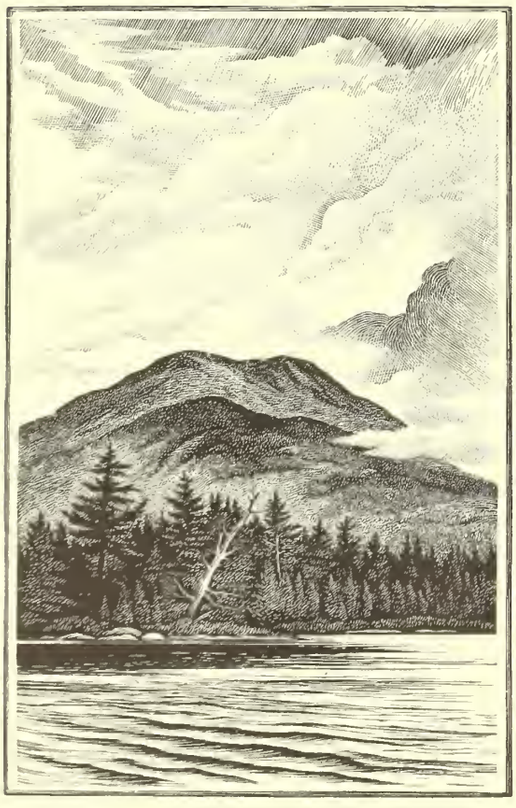


484

480 *The Angler*, drypoint on copper, 1950, 8 × 11, 25 proofs on various papers (blue, green, and cream).

481 *View of the Eight Mile River*, copper engraving, 1950, 6 × 8, few proofs.

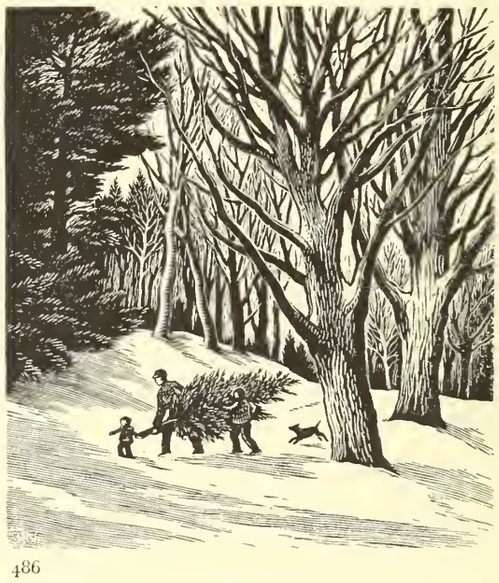
482 *Irvine's Place, Lyme*, wood engraving, 1950, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 60.

483 *Residence of Mrs. A.S. Ormsby, Deer Isle, Maine*, wood engraving, 1950, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 4\frac{5}{16}$, few proofs. The print was also used as part of a correspondence card with Mrs. Ormsby's name and address in type, below the picture.

484 *Mount Ktaadn*, wood engraving, 1950, $6\frac{1}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs, commissioned to decorate David McCord's *A Star by Day* (Little, Brown & Co., 1950), where it appears as frontispiece and on the dust jacket.There are also proofs, $6\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$, of the print surrounded by a frame. See *The Settings of the Prints*.

485 *Ex Libris George Page Ely*, copper engraving, 1950. See BOOKPLATES.

486 [Christmas card], wood engraving, 1950, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 100.



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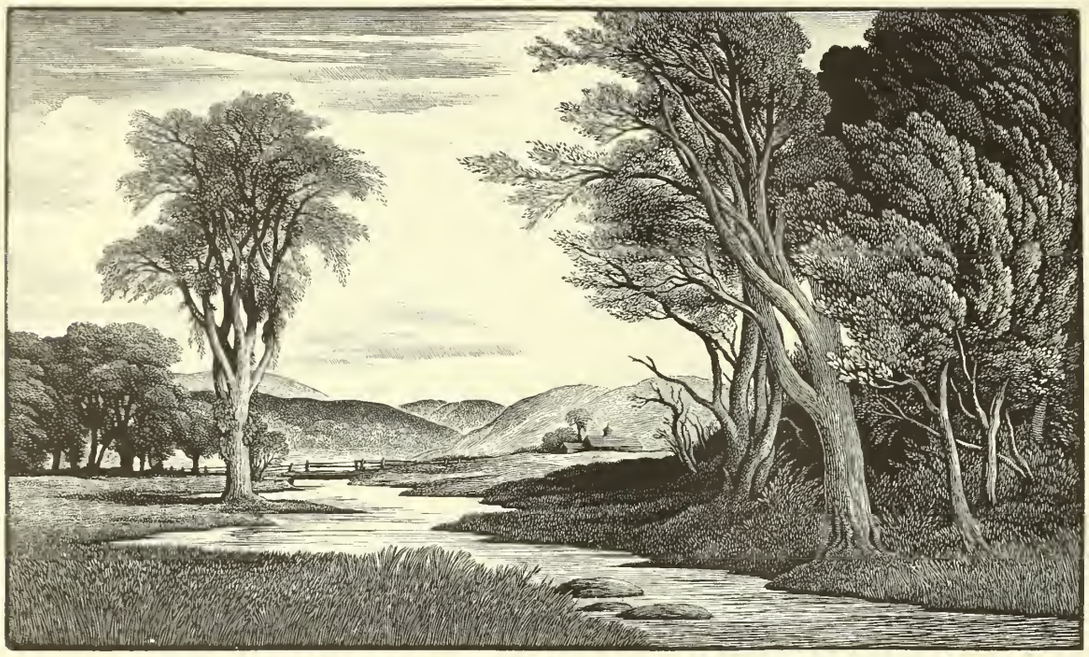

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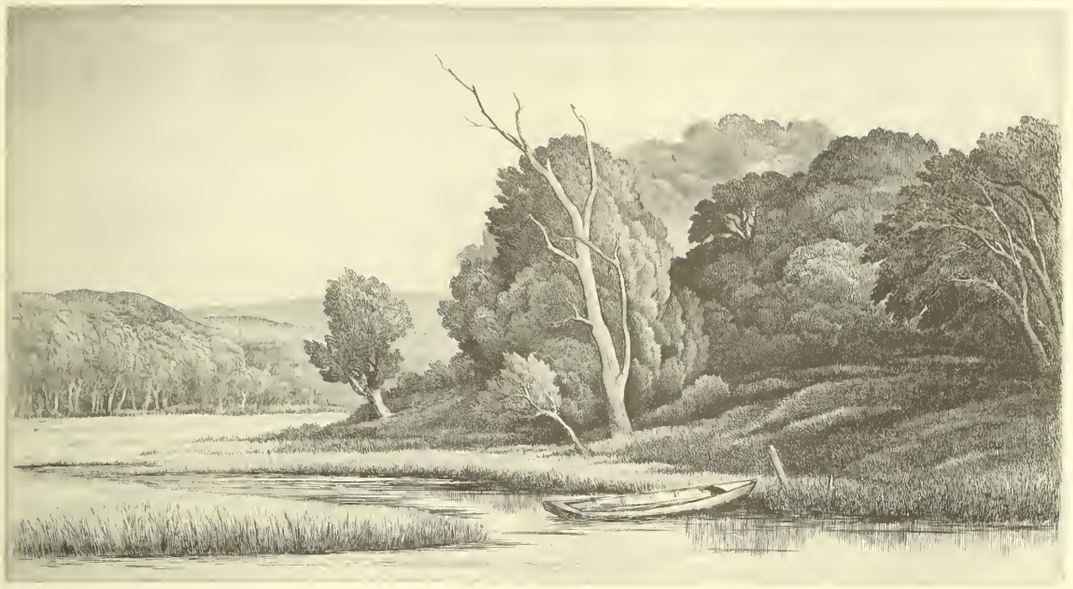


488

487 *The Eight Mile River*, etching and engraving on copper, 1951, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 12$, few proofs.

488 *Black Hall River*, copper engraving, 1951, $6\frac{3}{16} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$, few proofs.

489 *A New England Stream*, wood engraving, 1951, $5\frac{5}{16} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 400 for Associated American Artists.

490 *The Lieutenant River*, wood engraving, 1951, $3 \times 4\frac{3}{8}$, edition of 10.

491 *New London Muzzle-Loading Rifle Club*, wood engraving, 1951, diameter $3\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs. There are also proofs in which a black frame, printed from wood or metal, encloses the design (reproduced overleaf). Besides the proofs on paper, there are prints on leather which could be sewn onto shirts or jackets as emblems of the club.

492 *American Eagle*, wood engraving, 1951, $3\frac{13}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, unfinished, one known proof (overleaf).

493 *River Scene*, wood engraving, 1951, $5\frac{1}{16} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$, edition of 200 for Associated American Artists, followed by a further edition of 50, also for AAA.

490

493

494

WINTER MORNING

495

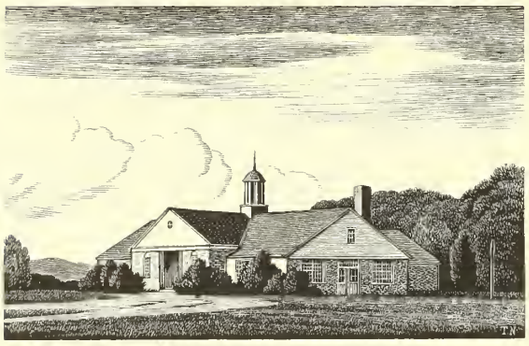
WITH BEST WISHES *from*
TOM & MARGARET NASON
CHRISTMAS 1952

501 and 502

Christmas Greetings
from
Tom and Margaret Nason

496

497



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494 *Star*, for Christmas card, wood engraving, 1951, $1\frac{5}{16} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$.

495 *Village and River*, wood engraving, 1951, $2\frac{7}{16} \times 3\frac{7}{8}$, printed as part of Christmas card noted above, edition of 100.

496 *Christmas Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason*, woodcut lettering, 1951, $\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, also used as part of this Christmas card. The lettering was used again in No. 542.

497 *Thirty-Six University Place*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and olive), 1952, $3 \times 3\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs, commissioned to illustrate Lawrance Thompson's *Elmer Adler at Princeton* (Princeton University Press, 1952.)

498 *School at Lyme, Connecticut*, wood engraving, 1952, $3 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

499 *Ex Libris John Adams Bross*, copper engraving, 1952. See BOOKPLATES.

500 *Ex Libris Nelson C. White*, copper engraving, 1952. See BOOKPLATES.

501 and 502 *Winter Morning*, wood engraving, 1952, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$ (including frame but not including woodcut lettering, below, of the title of the print "With best wishes from Tom & Margaret Nason Christmas 1952," apparently printed from a separate block, here assigned No. 502), edition of 100. Separate proofs exist of the framed design.

503 *Schermerhorn Hall*, wood engraving, 1953, $5\frac{11}{16} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs, first of series commissioned by Columbia University. The four prints which follow are also from this series.

504 *Low Library*, wood engraving, 1953, $1\frac{9}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$, few proofs.

505 *President's House*, wood engraving, 1953, $2\frac{15}{16} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

506 *Kent Hall*, wood engraving, 1953, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 4\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

507 *St. Paul's Chapel*, wood engraving, 1953, $4 \times 3\frac{1}{16}$, few proofs.

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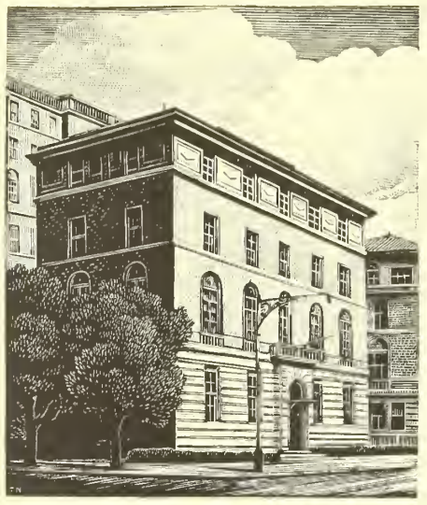

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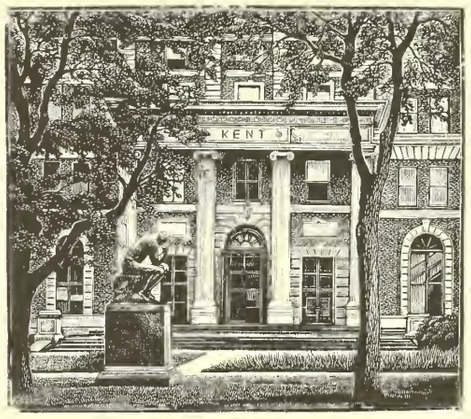

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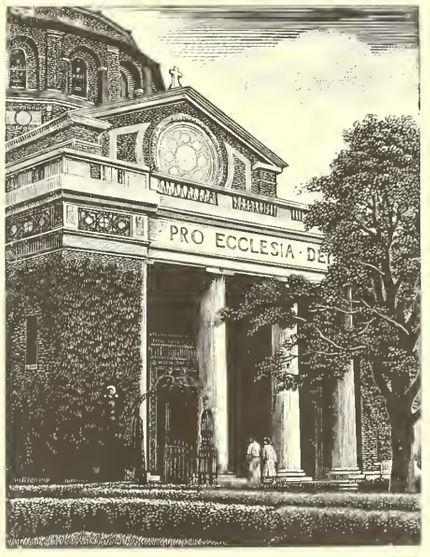

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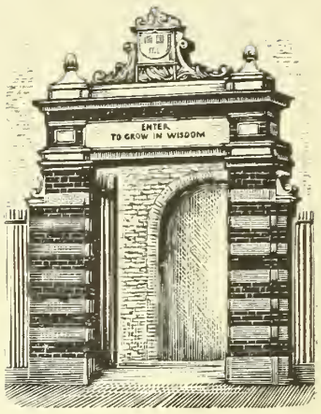

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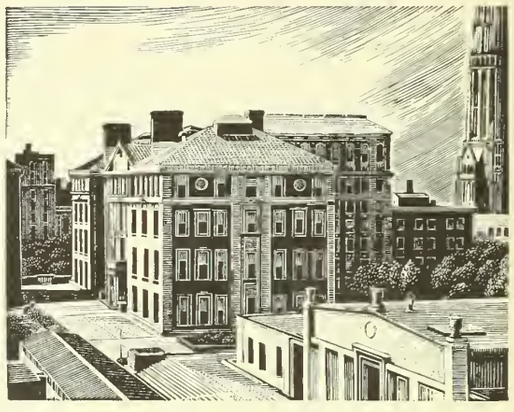

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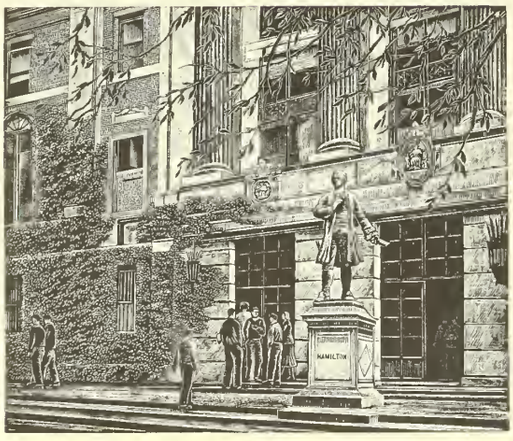

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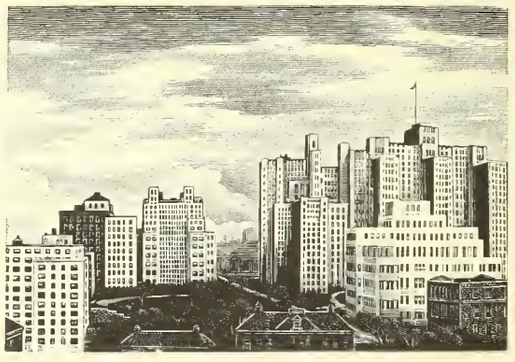

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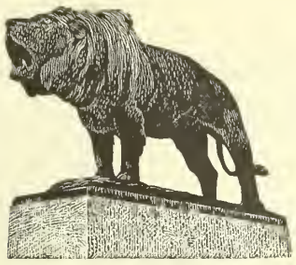

518

508 *Landscape*, wood engraving, 1953, $2\frac{1}{16} \times 3$, few proofs. A later, larger variant of this design is No. 529.

509 *The Pequot Library, In Memory of Marie Tidden Rennell*, wood engraving, 1953. See BOOKPLATES.

510 *Christmas Greetings from the Nasons 1953*, wood engraving, $3\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 100.

511 *Medical Center, Columbia University*, wood engraving, 1954, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 3$, few proofs. The eight prints which follow are also from the Columbia series.

512 *Medical Center*, wood engraving, 1954, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{11}{16}$, few proofs.

513 *Hamilton Hall*, wood engraving, 1954, $4\frac{5}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$, few proofs.

514 *Havemeyer Hall and Chandler Laboratory*, wood engraving, 1954, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 4$, few proofs.

515 *Broadway Entrance*, wood engraving, 1954, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

516 *Alma Mater*, wood engraving, 1954, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

517 *Van Am Memorial*, wood engraving, 1954, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

518 *The Lion*, wood engraving, 1954, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs.

519 *Low Library and the City*, wood engraving, 1954, $1\frac{7}{16} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, few proofs.

520 *Maine Islands* (also titled *Offshore Islands*), copper engraving, 1954, 7 × 12, edition of 40. No. 207, *Maine Landscape*, is an early, sketched-in, similar composition.

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521 *Midsummer*, wood engraving, 1954, 6 × 9⅛, edition of 450 for Associated American Artists.

522 "*Roaring Rocks*," copper engraving, 1954, 7⅛ × 11, edition of 200 for Elmer Adler.

523 *Fay House Doorway* (Radcliffe College), wood engraving, 1954, 4⅝ × 3⅜, few proofs.

524 *The Stone House, Horn Farm*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and green), 1954, 3 × 4, few proofs, commissioned to illustrate *The Story of Horn Farm* by Herman Cohn (Privately Printed, 1954). The black block is reproduced here.

525 *Milkweed Pod*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks, black and olive), 1954, 3⅜ × 2½, commissioned as decoration in a Christmas printing by the Spiral Press of Robert Frost's poem, *From a Milkweed Pod*. Reproduced here is a trial proof. The whites of the seeds' parachutes are lines engraved in the tint block.

526 *Milkweed*, wood engraving, 1954, 2⅝ × 2¾, commissioned as above, few proofs.

527 *Butterflies*, wood engraving, 1954, 1⅜ × 1 3/16, commissioned as above, few proofs.

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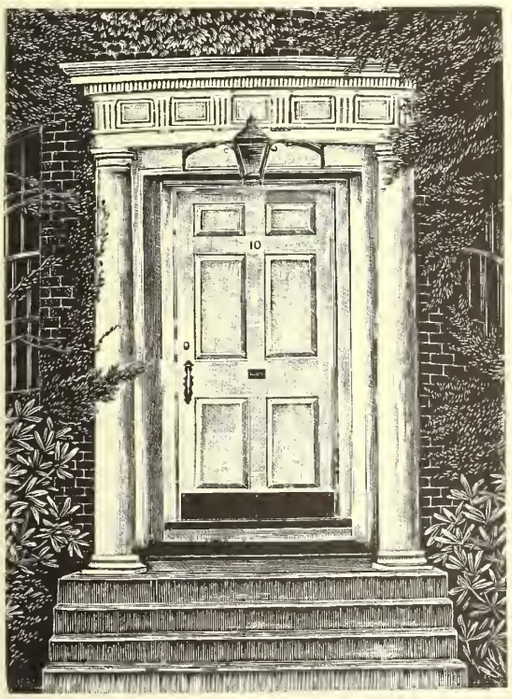

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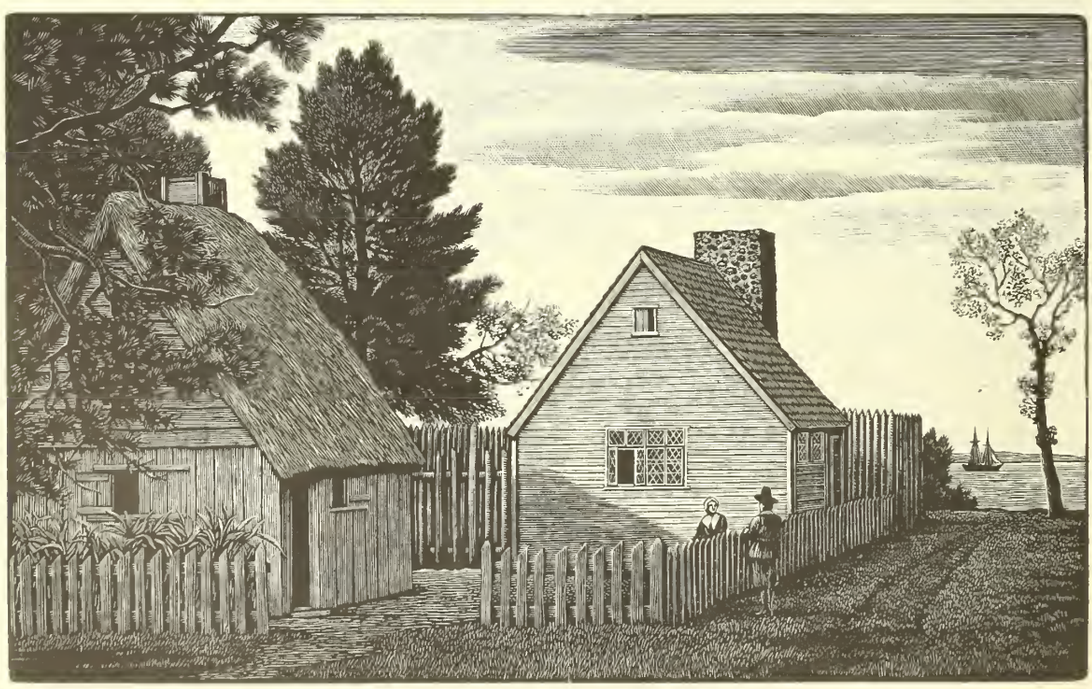
528 *The First House, Plimoth Plantation*, wood engraving, 1955, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, first edition of 50, second edition of 50. This is the first of three prints commissioned by Plimoth Plantation.

529 *The Little Farm*, wood engraving, 1955, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 9$, edition of 400 for Associated American Artists. No. 508 is a smaller, earlier version of the same design.

530 *The First House and Second House*, wood engraving, 1955, $4\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, first edition of 50, second edition of 50, for Plimoth Plantation.

531 *The Fort*, wood engraving, 1955, 5×7, first edition of 50, second edition of 50, for Plimoth Plantation.



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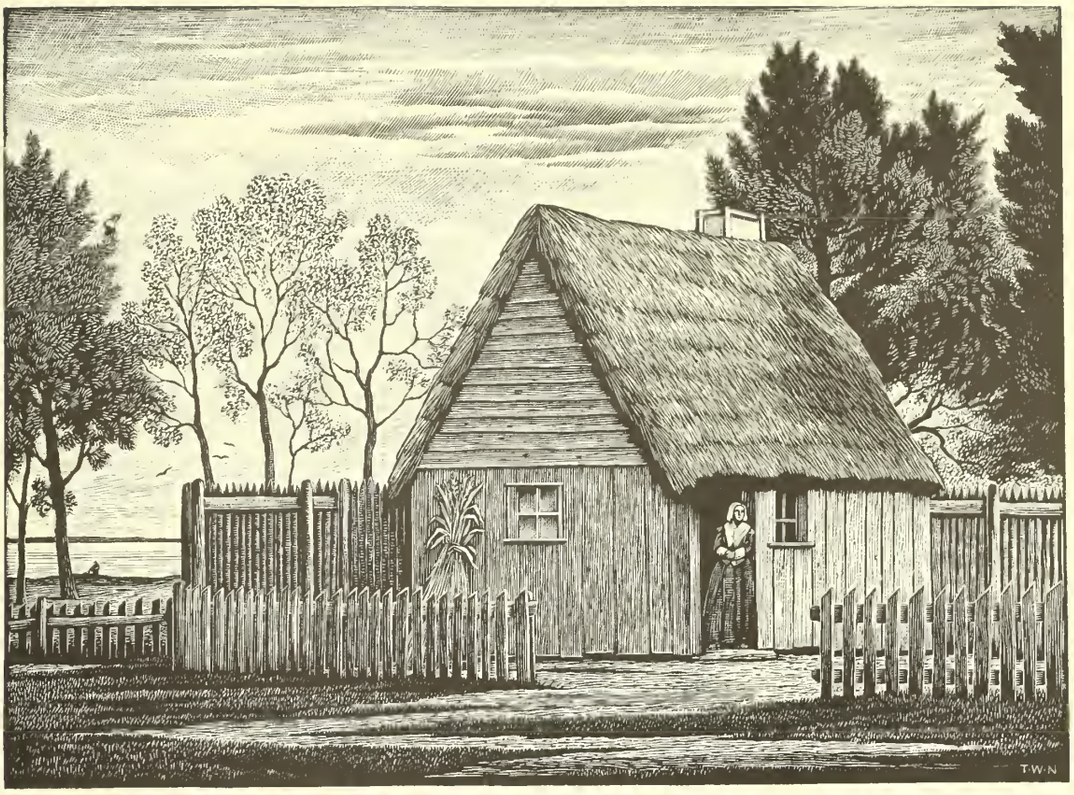

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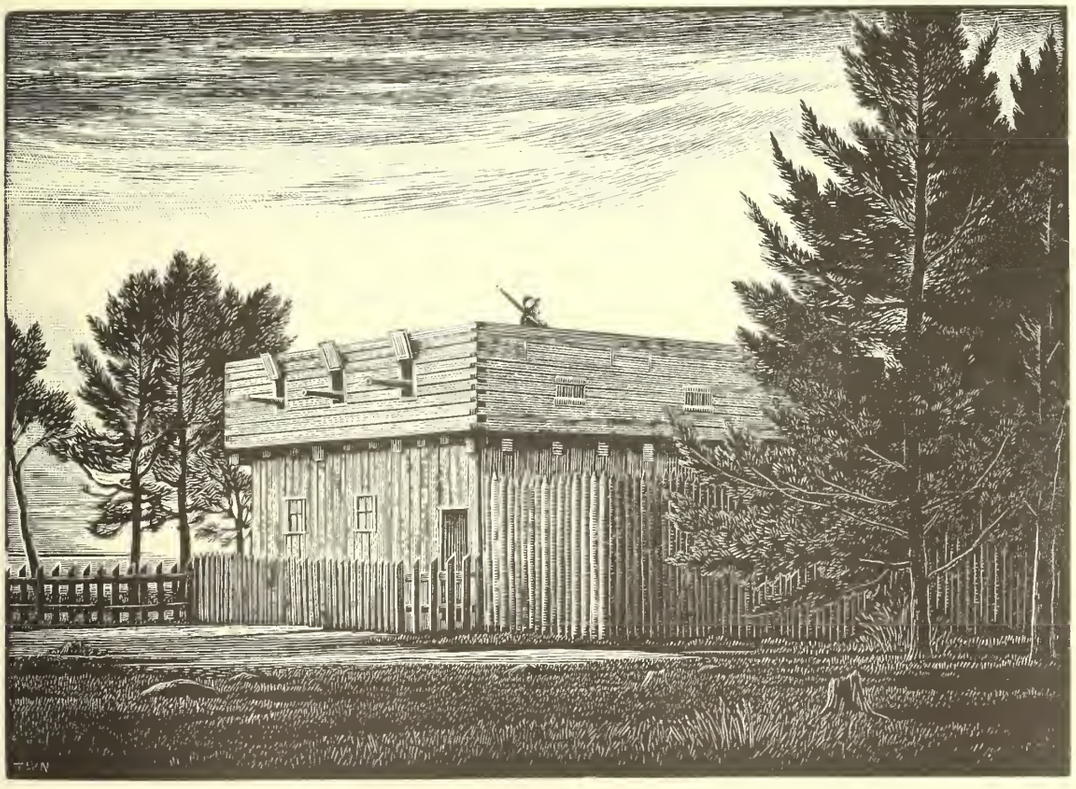

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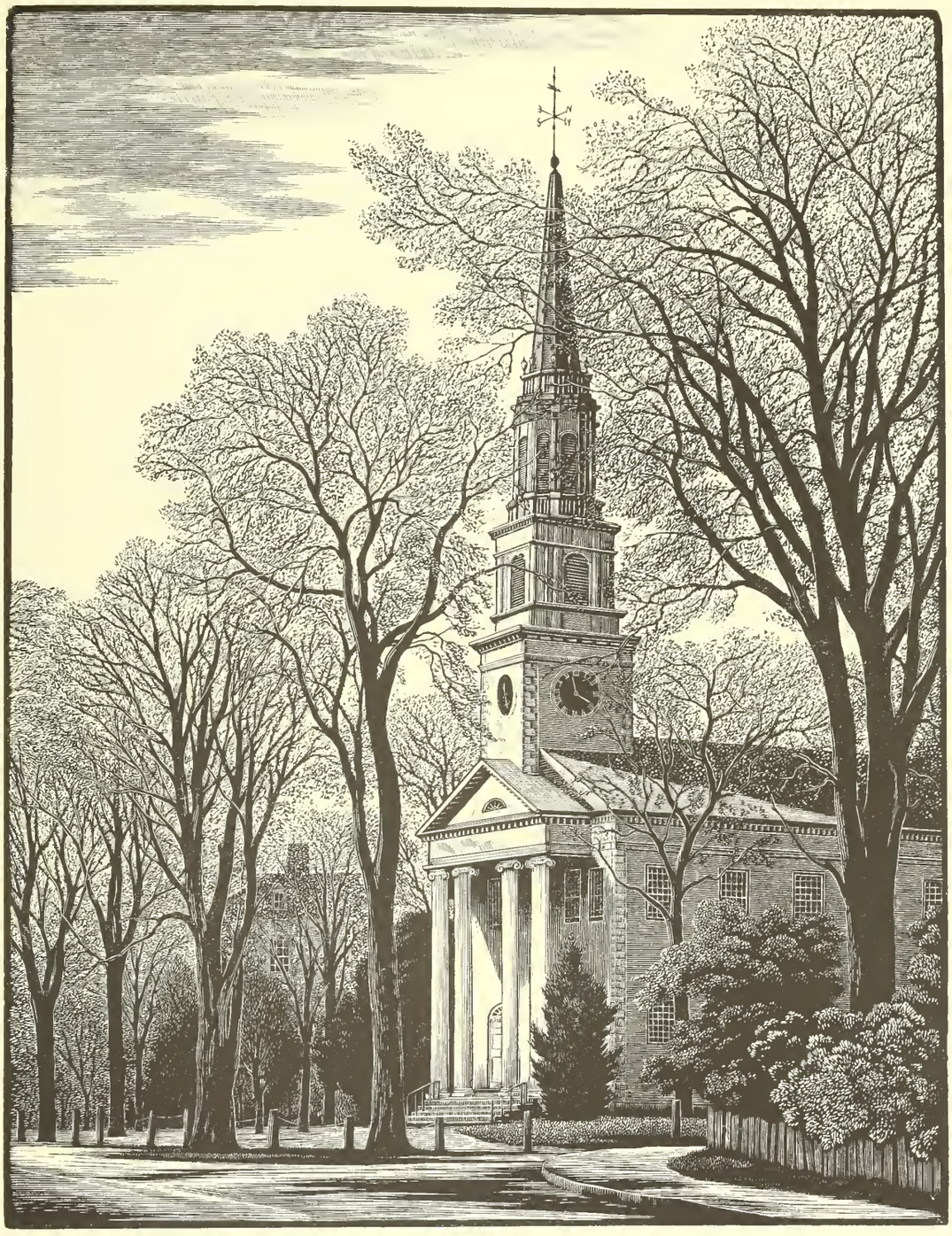

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532 *Self-Portrait*, copper engraving, 1955, $7\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$, about six impressions with the engraver's device in lower left-hand corner. There are also a few proofs taken before the device was added, and several working proofs of the plate at a preliminary stage of development.

533 *Patients' Library, Lawrence and Memorial Associated Hospitals*, copper engraving, 1955. See BOOKPLATES.

534 *Old Lyme Church*, wood engraving, 1956, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$, edition of 100.

539

535 *Parson Capen House*, wood engraving, 1956, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 100 for the Topsfield Historical Society.

536 *Northeastern University Library*, wood engraving, 1957, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$, few proofs.

537 *First Congregational Church, Hamburg, Connecticut*, wood engraving, 1957, $6\frac{3}{16} \times 7\frac{3}{16}$, edition of 50.

538 *General Studies Building, (Columbia University)*, wood engraving, 1957, $3\frac{7}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{16}$, few proofs.

539 *Approaching Storm*, wood engraving, 1957, $8 \times 11\frac{3}{4}$, edition of 35. The design is the reverse of No. 380, but with different handling of sky and light.

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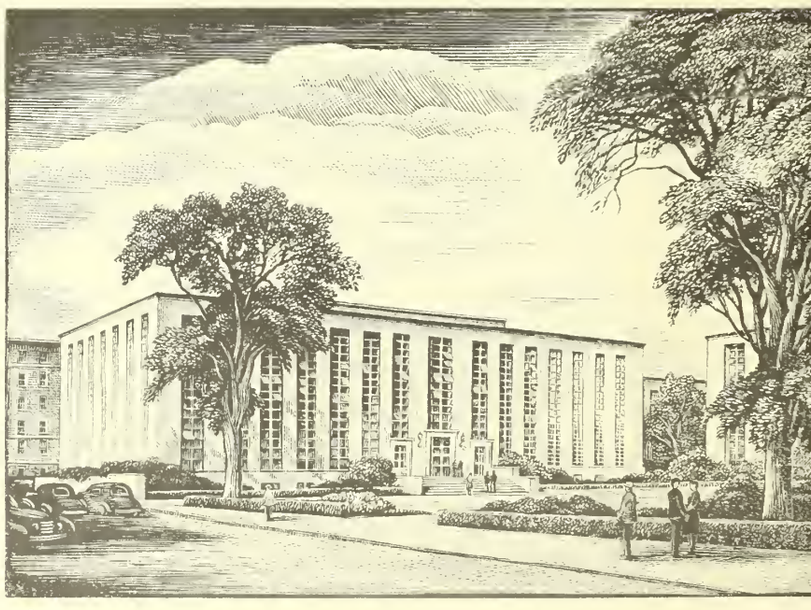

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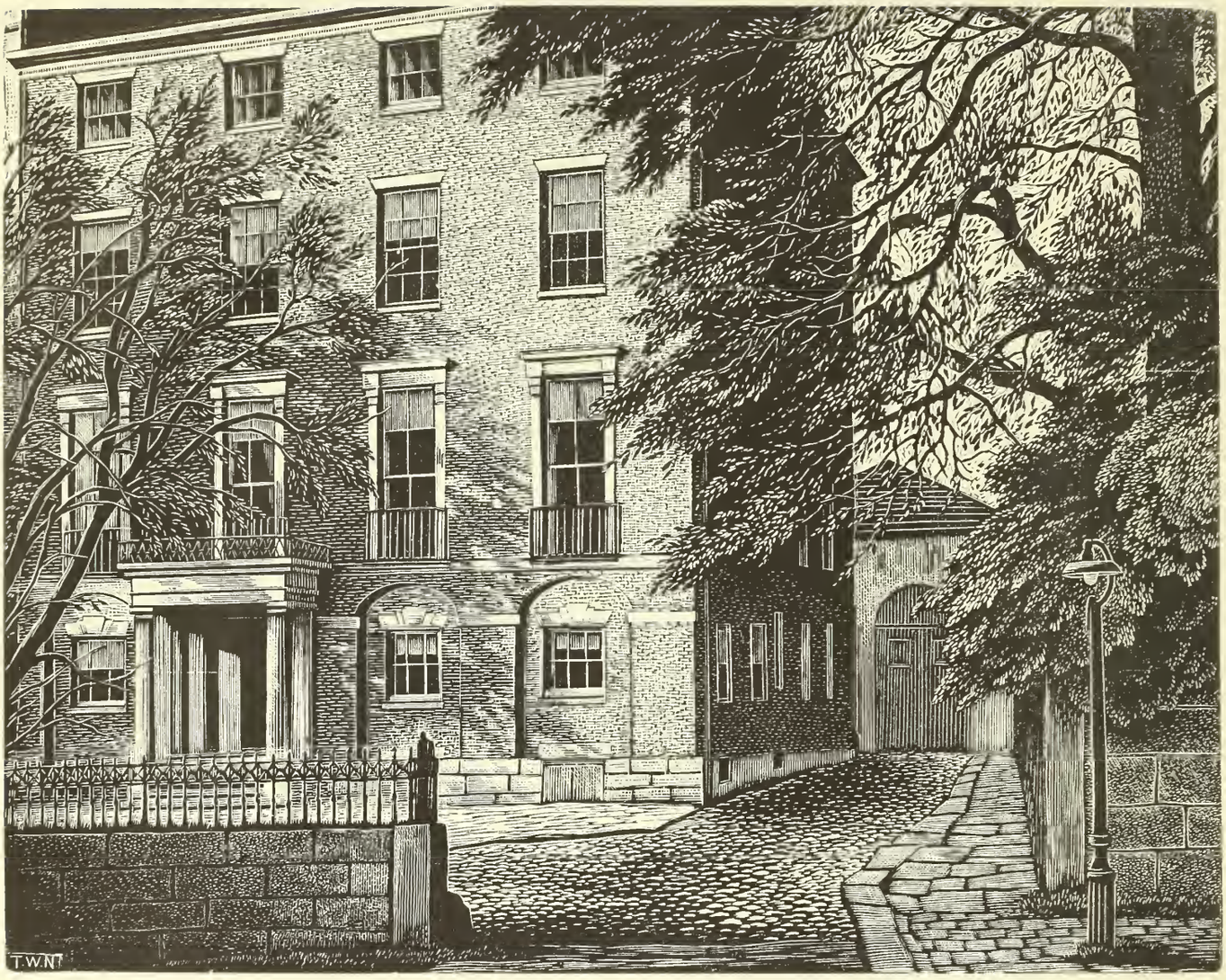

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540 *Tower Club, Princeton University*, wood engraving, 1957, 8 × 10, edition of 100 for the Club.

541 *Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, wood engraving, 1957, $6\frac{3}{8}$ × 8, edition of 100 for the Society.

542 *Christmas Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason*, wood engraving, 1957, 4 × 3 (picture only), with woodcut lettering below, 125 impressions. The lettering (see No. 496) was first used in 1951.

Christmas Greetings
From
Tom and Margaret Nason

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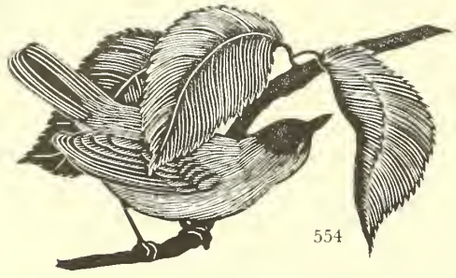

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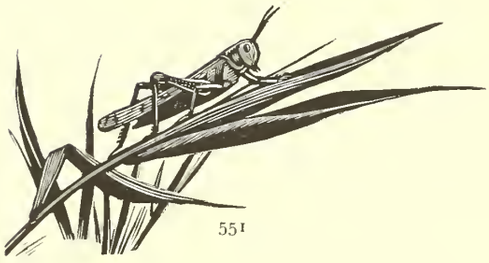

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556 (working proof)

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543 *Birches*, linoleum, cut, 1958, $5\frac{1}{16} \times 7$, for dust jacket of *You Come Too* by Robert Frost (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1959). The 25 wood engravings which follow were designed for this book.

544 *Birches*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$, for title page.

545 *Tree and Fence*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$, p. 6.

546 *Blueberries*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 4$, p. 11.

547 *The Spring*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$, p. 13.

548 *Winter Woods*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, p. 23.

549 *Christmas Trees*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$, p. 29.

550 *Columbine*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, p. 33.

551 *Grasshopper*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, p. 39.

552 *Butterflies*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, p. 41.

553 *Nest*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2$, p. 49.

554 *A Minor Bird*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, p. 53.

555 *The Birthplace*, wood engraving, 1958, $\frac{13}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, p. 58.

556 *Scythe, Rake and Tree*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, p. 61. A working proof is also reproduced. A variant design is No. 565.

557. *Wall*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, p. 65.

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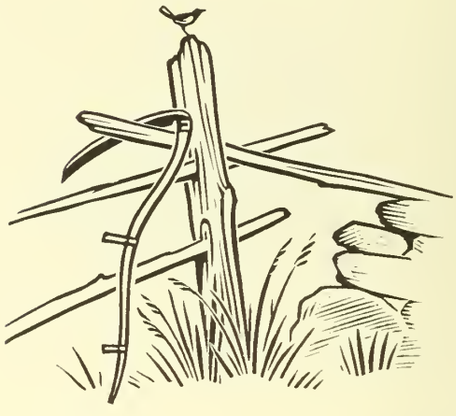

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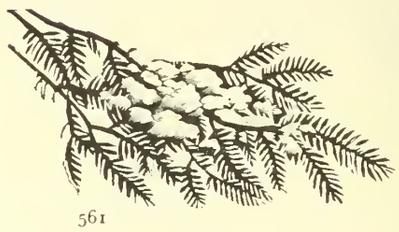

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558 *Loading Hay*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{1}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, p. 72.
559 *Farmhouse*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{13}{16} \times 3$, p. 77.
560 *Frog*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$, p. 78.
561 *Snowy Branch*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, p. 80.
562 *The Road Not Taken*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$, p. 83.
563 *Axe and Wood Pile*, wood engraving, 1958, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$, p. 91.
564 *Joe-Pye Weed*, wood engraving, 1958, $1 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, p. 93.
565 *Scythe and Tree*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$. A variant of No. 556, this is probably a rejected design for blind-stamp on front of binding.
566 *Scythe and Fence*, wood engraving, 1958, $2\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, the design from which die was made for stamping on front of binding.
567 *Acorn*, wood engraving, 1958, $\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$, not used.
568 *Christmas Greetings* [from] *Margaret and Tom Nason*, wood engraving, 1958, $4\frac{5}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$, edition of 50.
569 *A Remote Farm*, wood engraving, 1959, 8 × 10, edition of 25.

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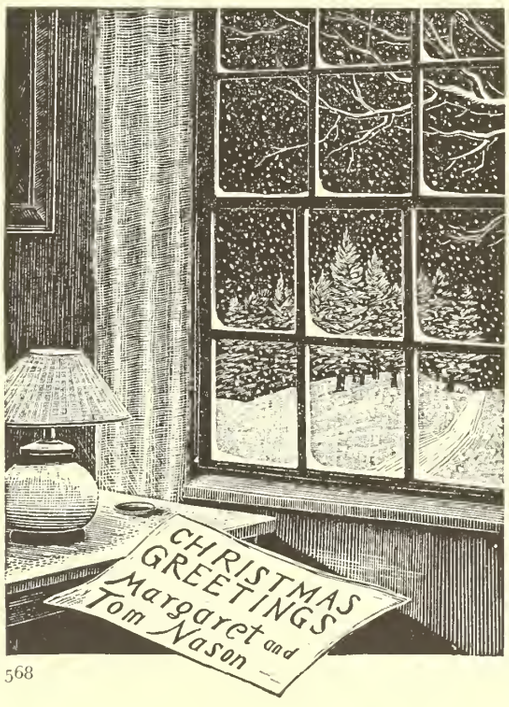

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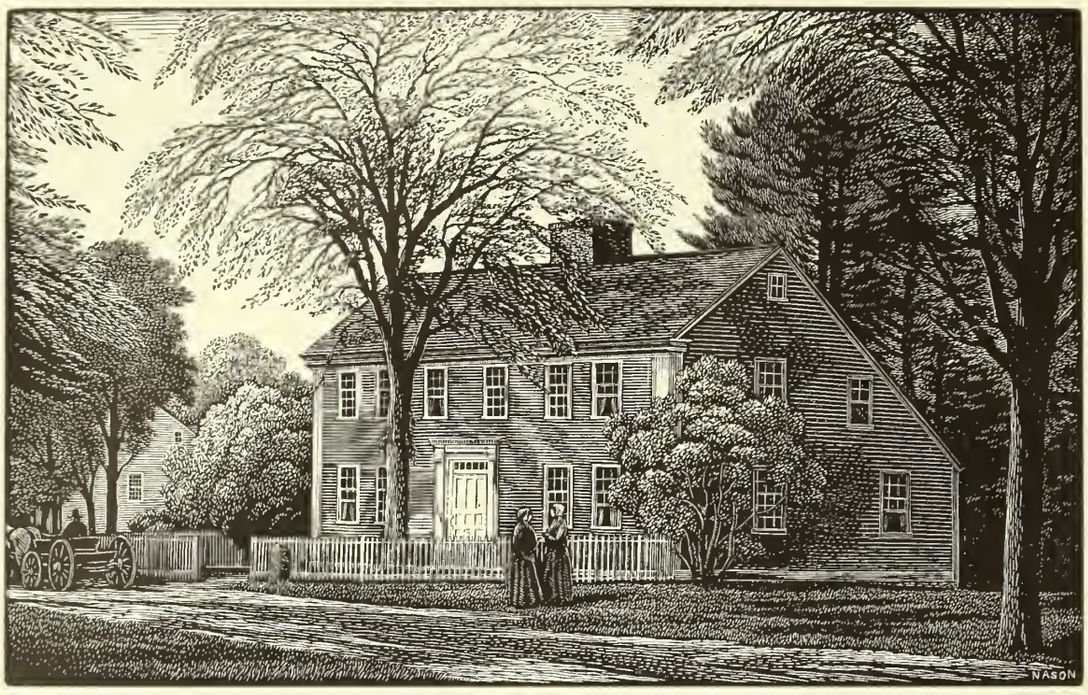

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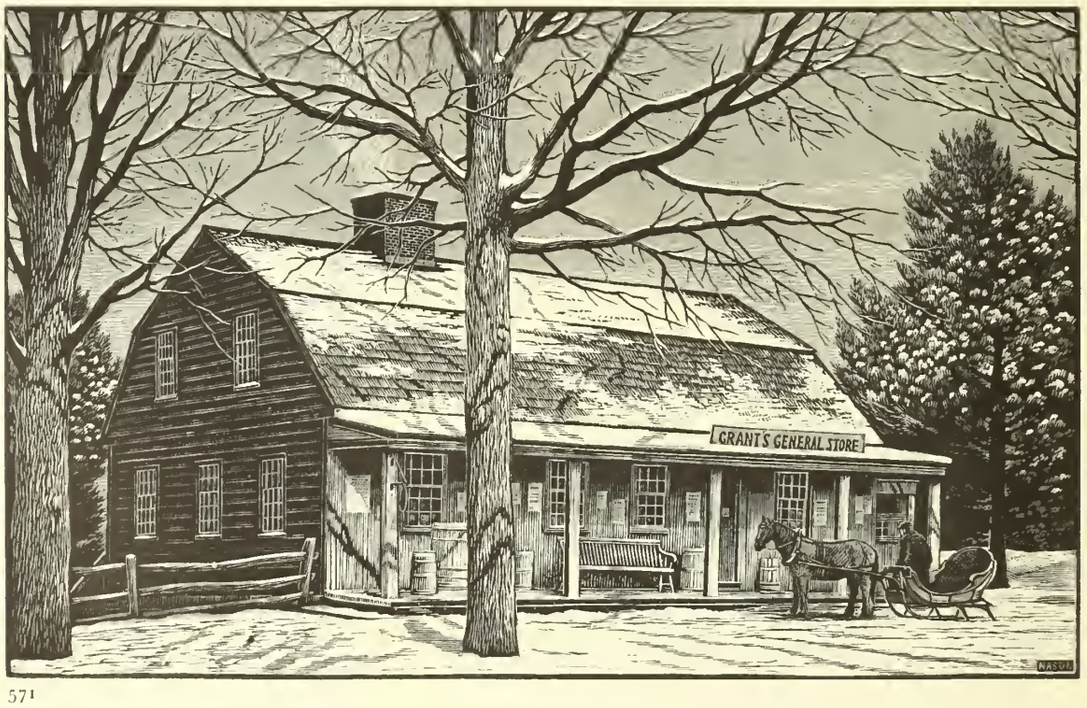
570 *Solomon Richardson House, c. 1748*, wood engraving, 1959, $5\frac{1}{8} \times 8$, one of a series of four prints commissioned by Old Sturbridge Village, edition of 100.

571 *The General Store*, (also called *Grant's General Store*), chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and grey), 1959, edition of 100.

572 *The Meeting House*, wood engraving, 1959, 7×8, edition of 100.

573 *Stephen Fitch House, 1737*, wood engraving, 1959, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8$, edition of 100.



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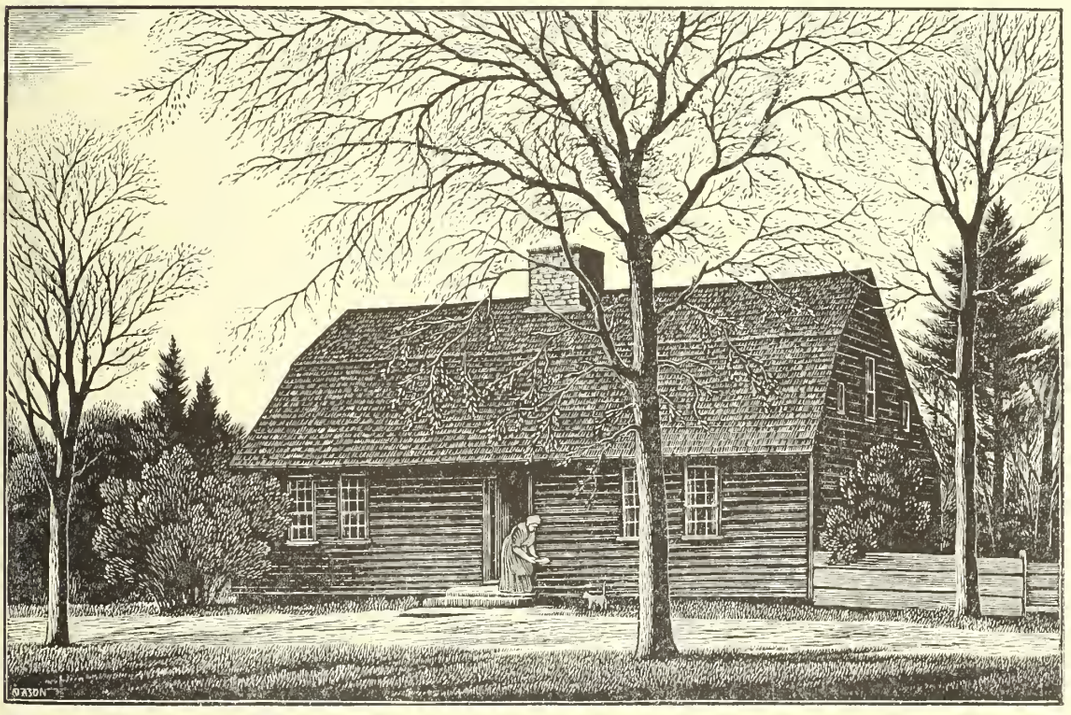

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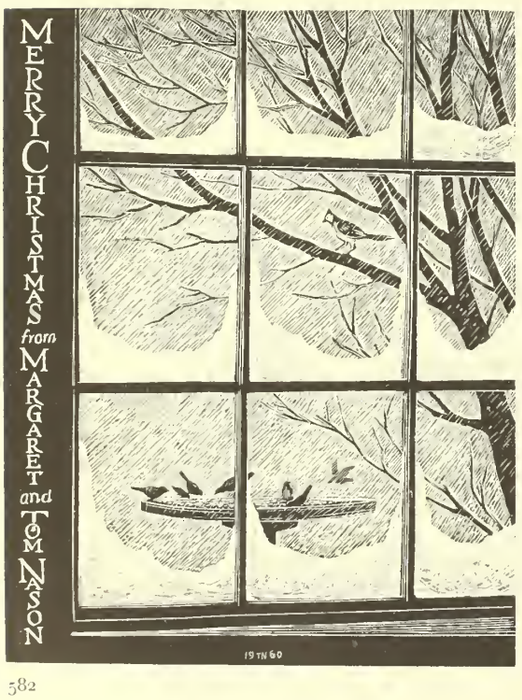

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574 [Pipe, Bubbles, Earth and the Moon], wood engraving, 1959, $2\frac{13}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$, commissioned (with the four prints which follow) as decoration in a Christmas printing by the Spiral Press of Robert Frost's poem, *A-Wishing Well*.

575 *Branch*, wood engraving, 1959, $\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$.

576 *Star*, wood engraving, 1959, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{15}{16}$.

577 *Stork*, wood engraving, 1959, $1\frac{1}{16} \times 2$.

578 *Ark*, wood engraving, 1959, $1 \times 1\frac{7}{8}$.

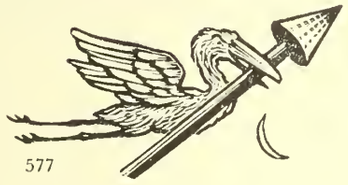
579 [Lyme Art Association], device, wood engraving, 1959, $2\frac{5}{16} \times 1\frac{13}{16}$, few proofs.

580 *Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year from Tom & Margaret Nason*, relief print from an intaglio plate, 1959, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 3\frac{9}{16}$, about 50 impressions, some printed on white paper, some on gold paper. The plate is zinc; the artist apparently inked it with a roller used to ink wood engravings, and printed it as a relief print.

581 *Colonial House*, copper engraving, 1960, $6\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$, unfinished, few proofs.

582 *Merry Christmas from Margaret and Tom Nason*, wood engraving, 1960, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, edition of 50.

583 *Observer*, wood engraving, 1961, $6\frac{3}{16} \times 9\frac{11}{16}$, for dust jacket of *Discovery, Great Moments in the Lives of Outstanding Naturalists*, edited by John K. Terres (Philadelphia and New York, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1961). The eight prints which follow also were decorations for this book.



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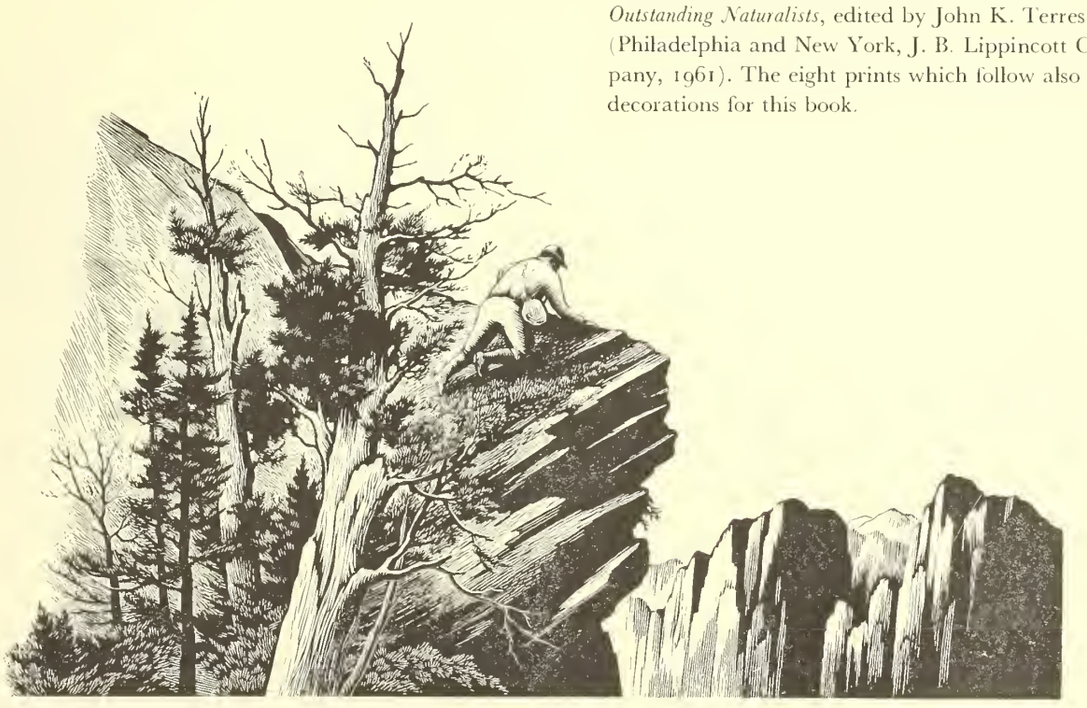

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584 *Eagle's Nest*, wood engraving, 1961, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$, dust jacket flap and p. 193.

585 *Rocky Shore*, wood engraving, 1961, 2 × 2, bastard title page.

586 *Mountain, Pines and Sea*, wood engraving, 1961, $1\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{9}{16}$, p. 1.

587 *Hut on the Shore*, wood engraving, 1961, $2\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$, p. 65.

588 *Mountain Stream*, wood engraving, 1961, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{11}{16}$, p. 133.

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589 *Whooping Crane*, wood engraving, 1961, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$, p. 169 and on back flap of dust jacket and as stamped design on front of binding.

590 *Tropical Shore*, wood engraving, 1961, $2\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, p. 269.

591 *Mountain Tops*, wood engraving, 1961, $1\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$, p. 388.

592 *Signet Society Doorway*, wood engraving, 1961, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$, few proofs.

593 "*Boscobel*", wood engraving, 1961, $3 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$, commissioned by *The Reader's Digest*, few proofs.

594 *The Old State House, Little Rock*, wood engraving, $8\frac{3}{8} \times 12$, edition of 15 for J. N. Heiskell of *The Arkansas Gazette*.

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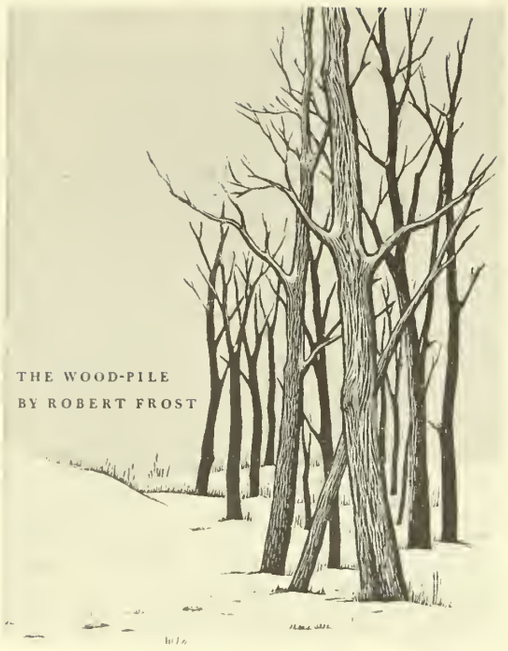

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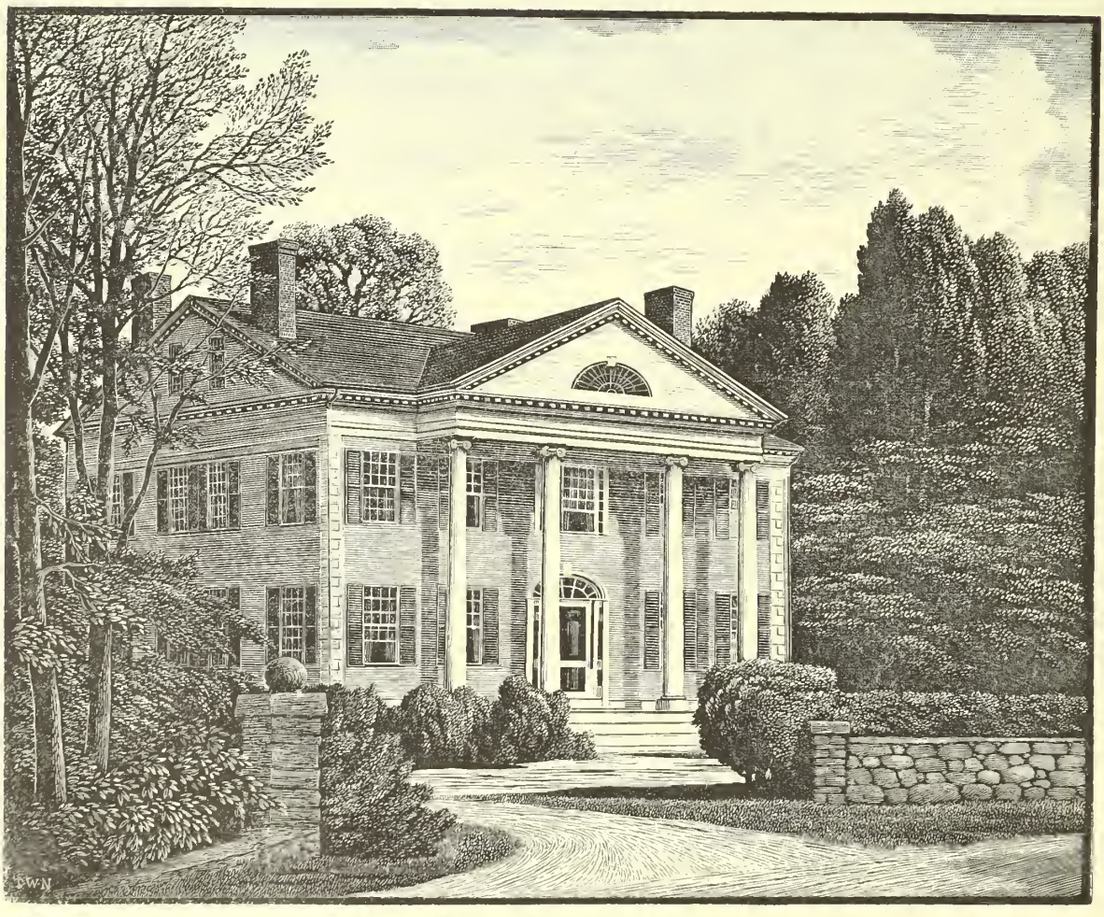

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595 *Trees in Snow*, wood engraving, 1961, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$, commissioned as decoration (with the three prints which follow) in a Christmas printing by The Spiral Press of Robert Frost's poem, *The Wood-pile*.

596 *Chickadee*, wood engraving, 1961, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$.

597 *The Wood-Pile*, wood engraving, 1961, $2\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$.

598 *Axe in a Stump*, wood engraving, 1961, $2 \times 1\frac{11}{16}$.

599 *Griswold House*, wood engraving, 1962, $8\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$, edition of 100 for the Old Lyme Historical Society.

600 *The Old Tavern*, wood engraving, 1962, 8×10, 12 proofs for J. N. Heiskell of *The Arkansas Gazette*.

601 *Christmas Greetings from Tom and Margaret Nason 1962*, in type, on the fourth page of a four-page Christmas card, the first page having a wood engraving, $2\frac{9}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$; edition of 100.

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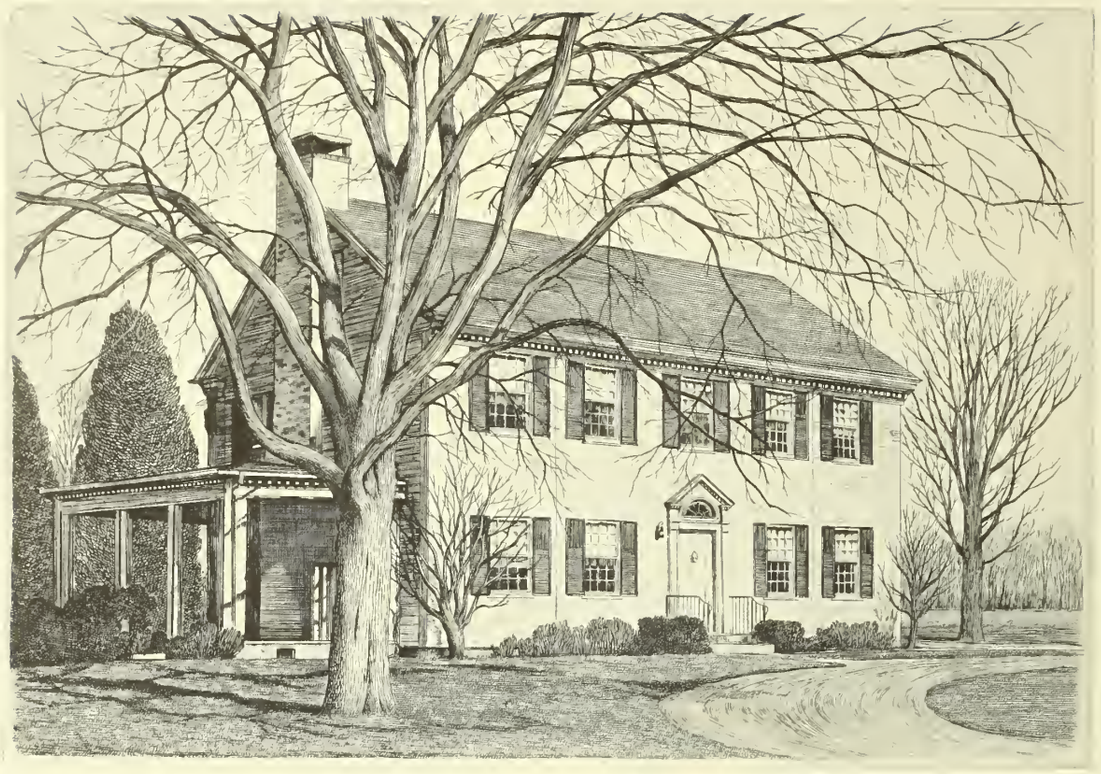

602

602 *The Macauley House*, copper engraving, 1963, $6\frac{15}{16} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$, 4 or 5 proofs.

603 *Lyme Garden Club*, device, wood engraving, 1963, $1\frac{3}{4}$ (diameter), few proofs.

604 *Lyme Garden Club*, device, wood engraving, 1963, $3\frac{13}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ (here reproduced), few proofs. The framing was then cut away, leaving the circular device with diameter of $3\frac{1}{2}$ (few proofs).

605 *Axe and Scythe, Hammer and Sickle*, wood engraving, 1963, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{5}{16}$, few proofs, title-page decoration (also used on label for slip-case) for *To Russia With Frost* (Boston: The Club of Odd Volumes, 1963).

606 *American Eagle over the Kremlin*, wood engraving, 1963, $1\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$, few proofs, p. 7, *To Russia With Frost*.

607 *Science Building, Haverford College*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and olive), 1964, $7\frac{7}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$, 10 artist's proofs; edition of 100 for the College.

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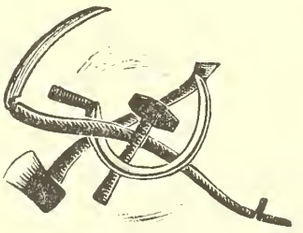

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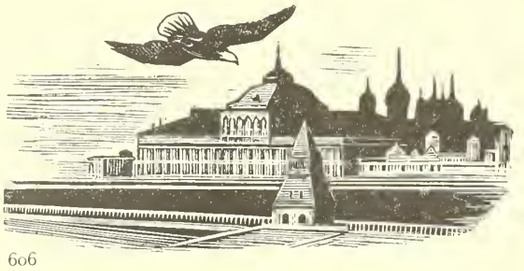

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608 *The Lieutenant River*, wood engraving, 1964, $5\frac{15}{16} \times 10$, one known proof.

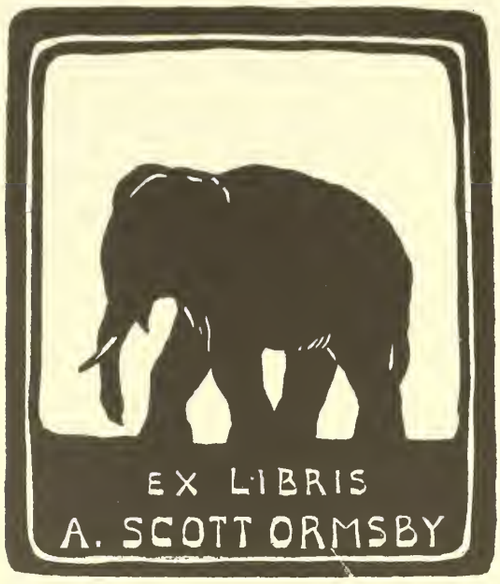
609 *Ex Libris Harry Snellenburg, Jr.*, copper engraving, 1964. See BOOKPLATES.

610 *Berkshire Farm*, copper engraving, $3\frac{3}{16} \times 4$. Working proofs exist; in addition, 22 impressions were printed in 1966. Begun in 1945, and taken up again two decades later, the plate was completed in 1966 and in a sense is the artist's last print. It has been assigned a number for each of these years; see No. 378.

610

BOOKPLATES

11 *Ex Libris A. Scott Ormsby*, woodcut, 1922, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$.
12 *Ex Libris Douglas Vanderhoof*, wood engraving, 1922, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$.
24 *Ex Libris Robert H. Burrage*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$.
25 *Ex Libris Charles D. Burrage, Jr.*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$.
26 *Ex Libris Margaret W. Nason*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{5}{16}$.



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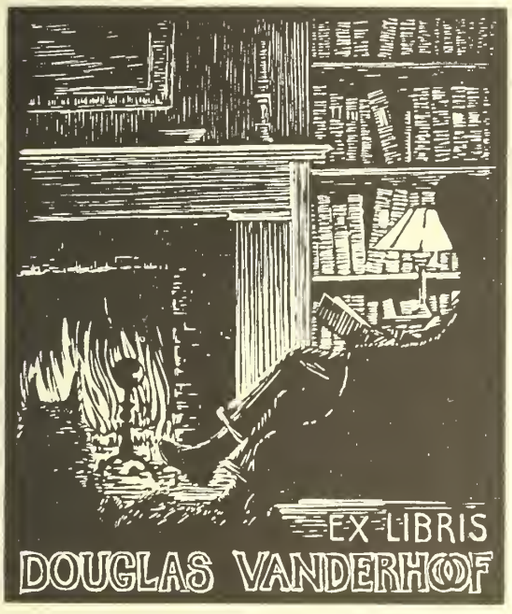

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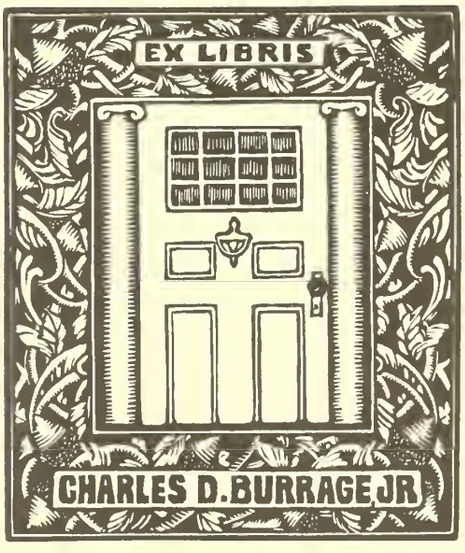

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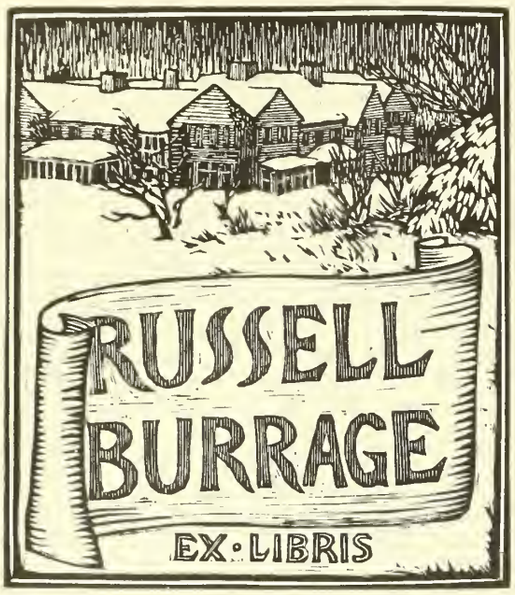

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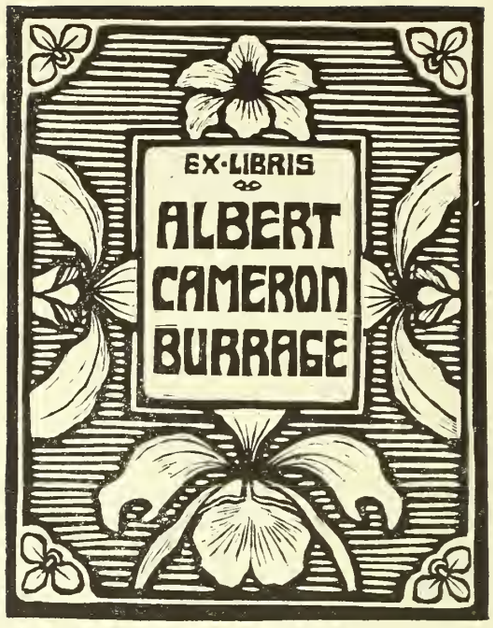

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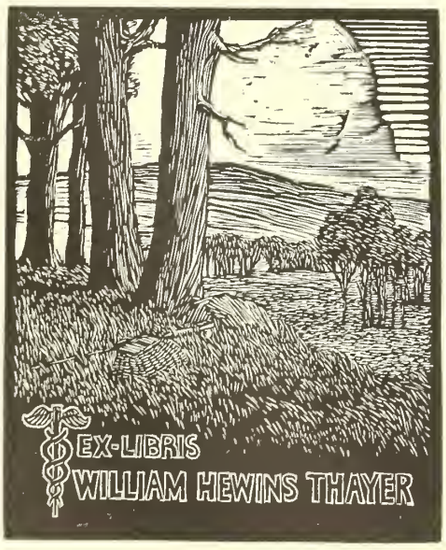

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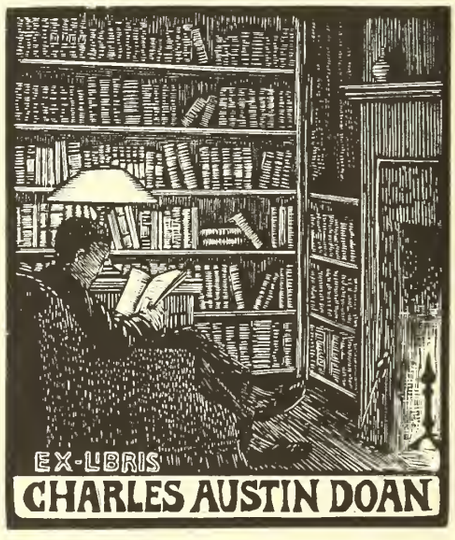

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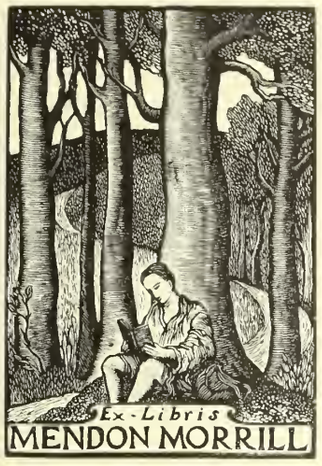

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27 *Russell Burrage, Ex-Libris*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3$.
28 *Ex-Libris Albert Cameron Burrage*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{5}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{8}$.
29 *Ex-Libris Rachel Lee Grinnell*, wood engraving, 1923, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$.
30 *Ex-Libris William Hewins Thayer*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$.
31 *Ex-Libris Charles Austin Doan*, wood engraving, 1923, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$.
32 *Ex-Libris William Sydney Thayer*, wood engraving, 1923, $2\frac{7}{16}$ diameter.
42 *Ex-Libris Helen Warren*, wood engraving, 1924, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{16}$.
60 *Ex-Libris Thomas Nason*, wood engraving, 1925, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$.
103 *North Haven Library*, wood engraving, 1928, $4\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$.
104 *Florence D. L. Lawton*, wood engraving, 1928, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$ (design only, including black border).
121 *Ex-Libris Samuel Robert Morrill*, wood engraving, 1930, $2\frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{11}{16}$.
122 *Ex-Libris Mendon Morrill*, wood engraving, 1930, $2\frac{11}{16} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$.

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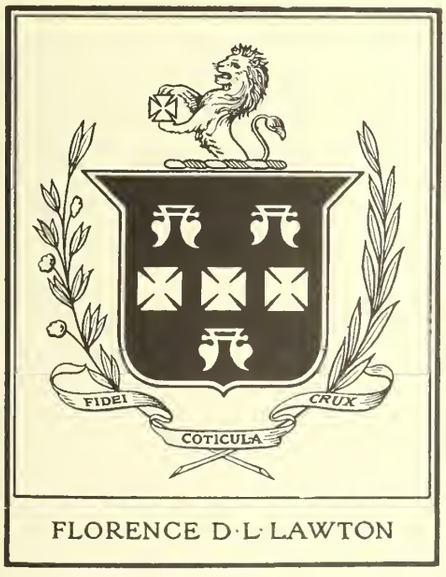

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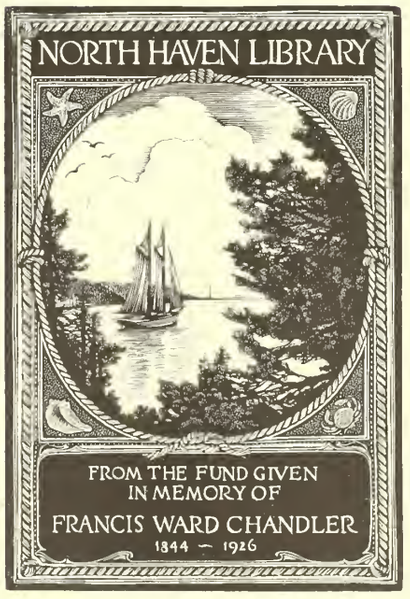

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222

136 *Ex Libris T W N*, wood engraving, 1931, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$. A proof worked over by the artist in pencil is reproduced here.

160 *Margaret Warren Nason*, copper engraving, 1931, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$.

161 *Ex-Libris*, copper engraving, 1933, $3\frac{9}{16} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$.

175 *Ex Libris Deborah and Amédée Turner*, wood engraving, 1934, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{9}{16}$.

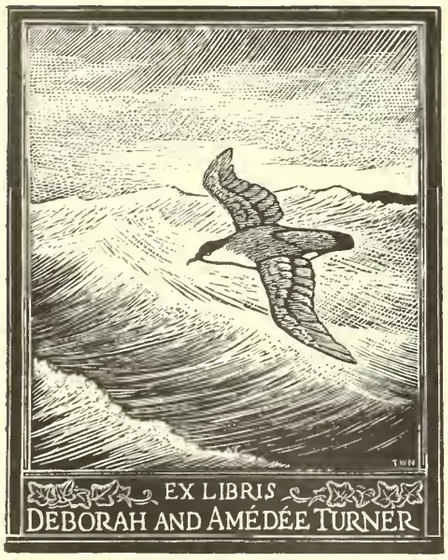
176 *Harry McInvaill His Book*, copper engraving, 1934. First state, reproduced here, $5\frac{7}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$ (to plate mark); second state, plate cut down to $3\frac{7}{8} \times 3$, design unchanged.

222 *E A* [Elmer Adler], wood engraving, 1937, $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$.

223 *James D. Colt Memorial Library, Chestnut Hill Garden Club*, copper engraving, 1937, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$.

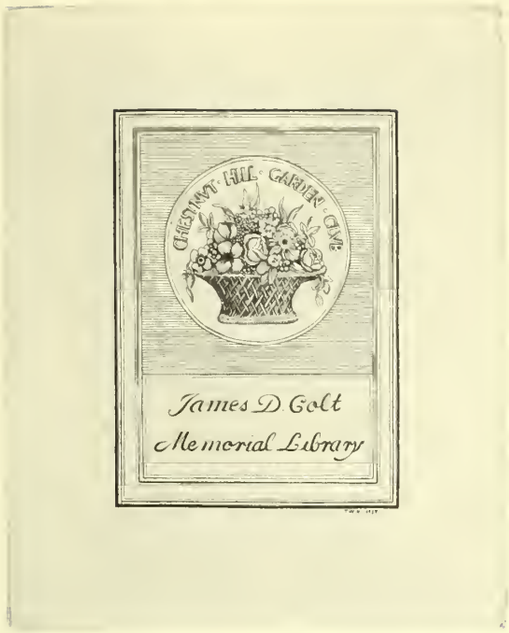
224 *El Libro de Carl Tilden Keller*, copper engraving, 1937, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$.

225 *Ex Libris John Taylor Arms III*, copper engraving, 1937, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$.



175

224 (working proof)



223

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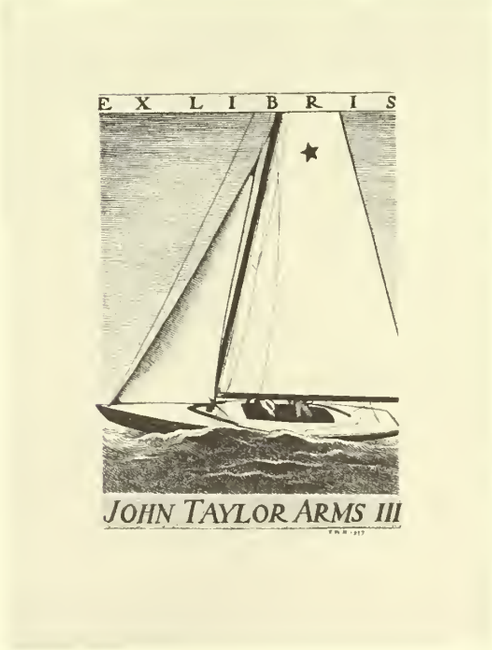
136

224



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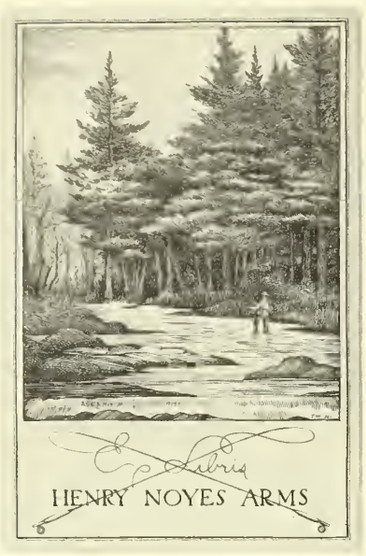
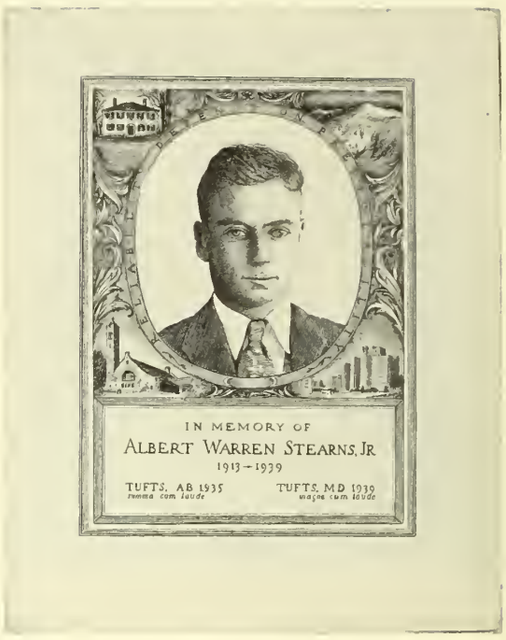
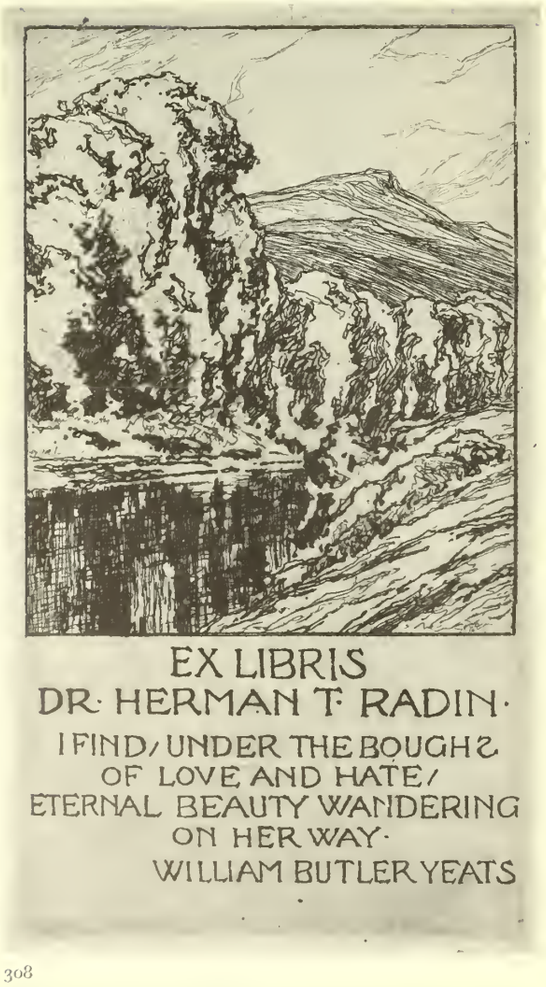


277



318



308

276 *Ex Libris George H. Sargent.* One of several bookplates apparently found in the artist's papers, this plate was included in the catalogue but proved, shortly before we went to press, not to be his work. An original found in the Boston Public Library bookplate collection is marked Oct. 15, 1914, the date of receipt. In tiny scratched lettering on the base of the monument design about $\frac{1}{4}$″ from the bottom of the design is the signature ANM and the date 1913.

277 *Ex Libris Henry Noyes Arms*, copper engraving, 1938, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$.

307 *Ex Libris Robert Walcott, Audubon Society of Massachusetts*, copper engraving, 1940, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$.

308 *Ex Libris Dr. Herman T. Radin*, etching, 1940, $5\frac{5}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$ (to plate mark).

318 *In Memory of Albert Warren Stearns, Jr.*, copper engraving, 1941, 5 × 4.

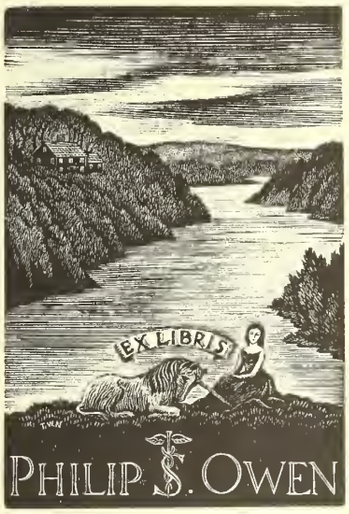
319 *Ex Libris Philip S. Owen*, wood engraving, 1941, 3 × $2\frac{1}{16}$.

320 *Ex Libris Walter Piston*, copper engraving, 1941, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$.

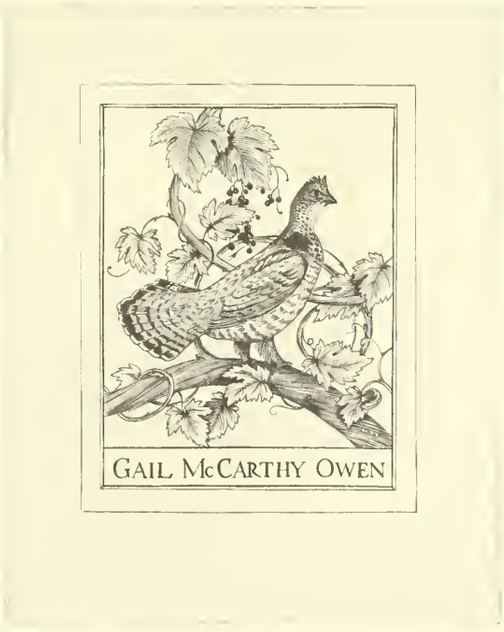
321 *Gail McCarthy Owen*, copper engraving, 1941, 5 × 4.

307

320

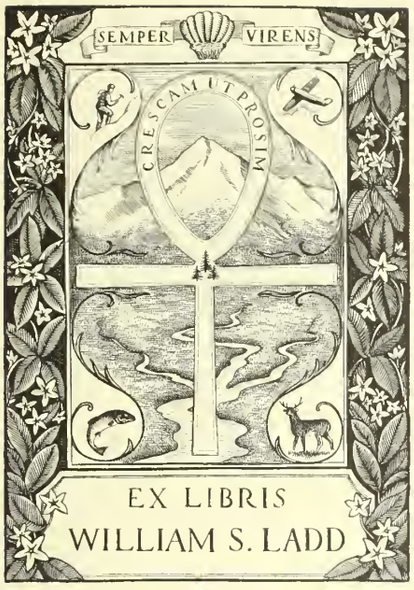


319



321

Original drawing of border for bookplate and at center the finished bookplate, No. 374, with wood engravings based on the drawing



464

375

381

442

THE ANGLING COLLECTION
OF CHARLES C. WRIGHT
Kenyon, 1896

374 [*Yale University Library. Discovery and Settlement of Western North America. Collection of William Robertson Coe,*] border of eight wood engravings, 1944, $4\frac{5}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$. The original drawing is here reproduced actual size. Based on the drawing, the artist made eight tiny wood engravings which were joined to provide the border of the bookplate. In the open space in the center of the drawing, the bookplate, with type arranged by Carl Purington Rollins, is reproduced. The type was printed in black, the border of wood engravings in brown.

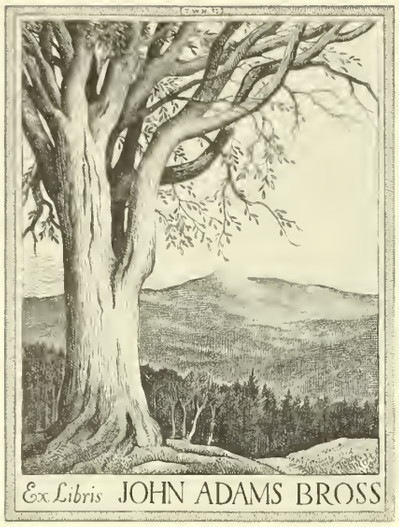
375 [Yale University School of Divinity Library], wood engraving, 1944, $1\frac{11}{16} \times 1\frac{11}{16}$.

376 *Michael B. Cordon*, copper engraving, 1944, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{5}{16}$, two states, the first without lettering.

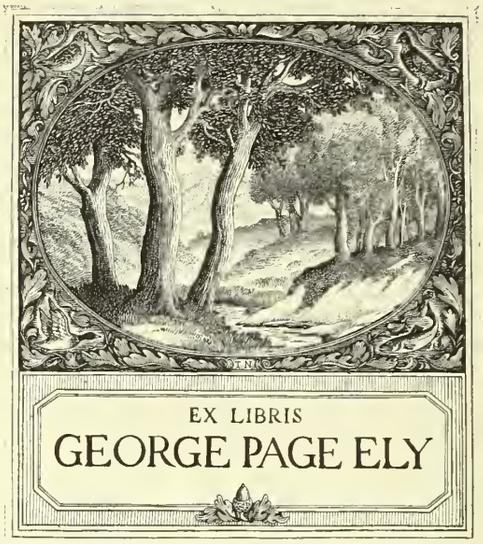
381 *Ex Libris Patris C. A. Cordon*, wood engraving, 1945, $3\frac{13}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$. The block was used again, by Catherine P. Cordon, in 1948. The artist cut out part of the block in order to remove the original name and replace it with her name, also in woodcut lettering.

442 *Kenyon College Library. The Angling Collection of Charles C. Wright*, wood engraving, 1948, $2\frac{3}{16} \times 2\frac{1}{16}$, with type above and below.

376 (first state)



499



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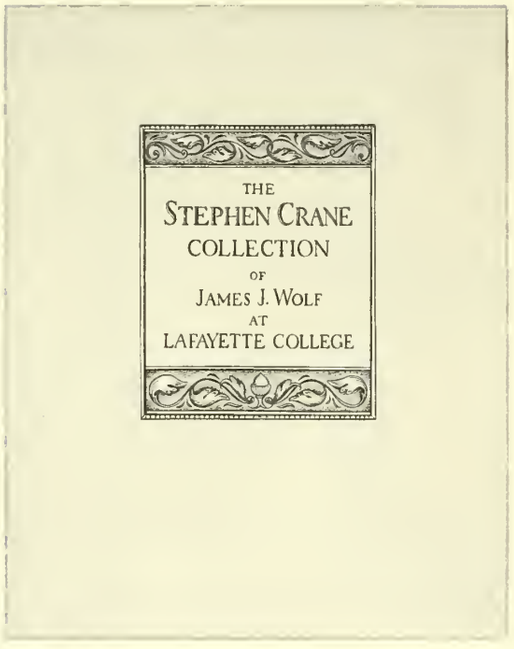
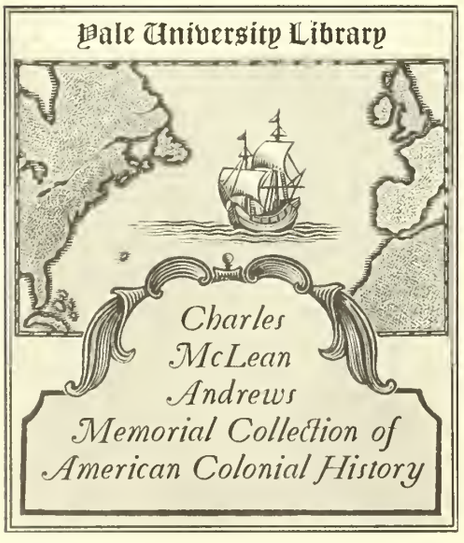


465

443



444

443 *Ex Libris Lorimer B. Slocum*, wood engraving, 1948, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$.

444 *Yale University Library. Charles McLean Andrews Memorial Collection of American Colonial History*, chiaroscuro wood engraving (two blocks: black and grey-green), 1948, $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{11}{16}$.

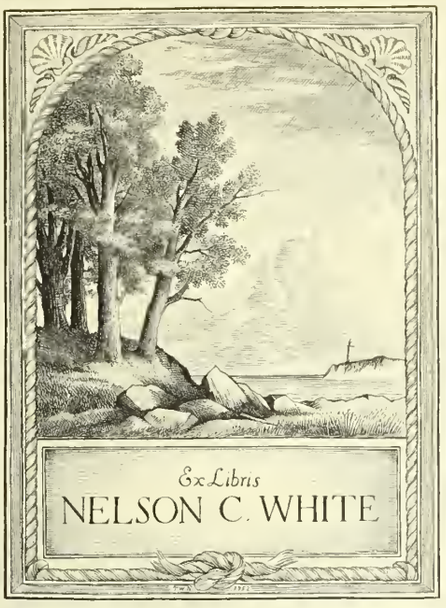
459 *Lamont Library*, pen drawing, 1949, reproduced in an electrotype measuring $\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$.

464 *Ex Libris William S. Ladd*, wood engraving, 1949, $3\frac{7}{16} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$, reproduced on page 213.

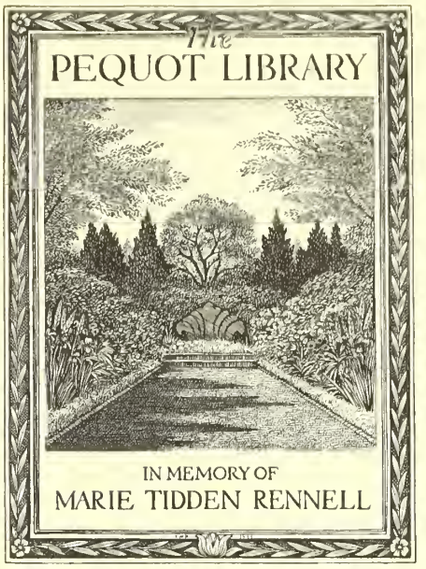
465 *The Stephen Crane Collection of James J. Wolf at Lafayette College*, copper engraving, 1949, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$.

485 *Ex Libris George Page Ely*, copper engraving, 1950, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{16}$.

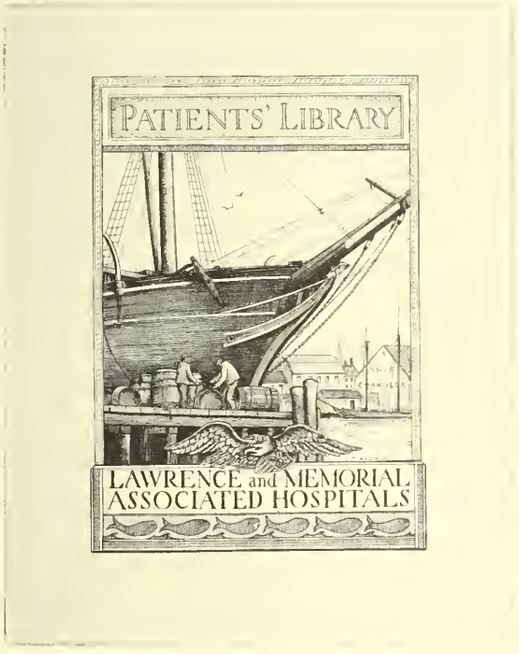
499 *Ex Libris John Adams Bross*, copper engraving, 1952, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$.



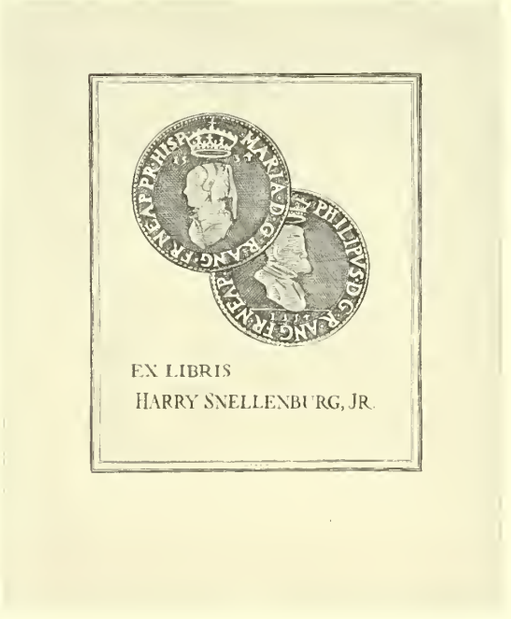
500



509



533



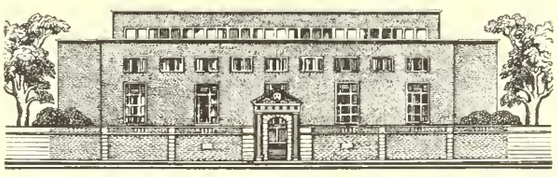
609

500 *Ex Libris Nelson C. White*, copper engraving, 1952, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$.

509 *The Pequot Library, In Memory of Marie Tidden Rennell*, wood engraving, 1953, $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{7}{16}$.

533 *Patients' Library, Lawrence and Memorial Associated Hospitals*, copper engraving, 1955, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$. [Bookplate design for Reader's Digest: see No. 117]

609 *Ex Libris Harry Snellenburg, Jr.*, copper engraving, 1964, $4\frac{15}{16} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$.



459

The Woodcock, pencil drawing, actual size. See No. 159, p. 86.

PRINTS KNOWN THROUGH DESCRIPTIONS ONLY

INFORMATION about some of these prints can be confirmed from several different sources. When an entry cannot be confirmed in this way, lack of supporting evidence or the possibility of duplication of an entry already in the main catalogue are noted. The number of each entry indicates where the print would be placed in the main catalogue sequence.

6A *Three Trees*, woodcut, 1922, 7 × 5½, block cancelled. The print appears in the typewritten *Chronological List of Prints by Thomas Nason* of February, 1945; there, it is No. 3, with the title *Trees* and the note: "few proofs. None available."

45A *Landscape with Farmhouse*, wood engraving, 1925, 2 × 5¼, few proofs. The print is No. 17 on the list of February 1945, which notes: "few proofs."

47A *Pegasus*, wood engraving, 1925, 3½ × 3, only one proof made. The subject probably was similar to the Pegasus which appears, with woodcut lettering, in the artist's bookplate of 1925.

71A *Beacon Street, Boston*, wood engraving, 1926, 2 × 3¾. The print appears in the *Chronological List* of 1945 with the information: "Few proofs. Unpublished."

79A *T. W. N.*, wood engraving, 1927, 1 7/16 × 1, few proofs. No proofs have been located. It is believed that this is the design with crow and chipmunk and the artist's initials which he engraved in a variety of sizes at various times.

80A *Summer Landscape*, wood engraving, 1927, 5½ × 7¾. The print appears in the list of February 1945 with the note: "Unpublished."

174A *On the River*, drypoint on zinc, 1934, 4 × 6.

210A Christmas card: village with crescent moon, wood engraving, 1936, 1 13/16 × 3 15/16. Although no impression of the Christmas card has been located, a village scene with crescent moon, titled *The New Moon* (wood engraving, 1⅞ × 4) is among Nason's illustrations of 1947 of *The Poems of William Cullen Bryant*. Allowing for slight variations in measurement, this conceivably might be a block of 1936 used again.

279A Christmas card: winter scene with stream. Said to have been used in 1938, with dimensions of 2 15/16 × 4 3/16. The Nasons, however, sent out address cards that year, one engraved on wood, the other (a map) on copper. In addition, the wood engraving became, in a second state, a Christmas card. Both states are noted in the list of February 1945, No. 114. There is some doubt about the likelihood of still another Christmas card. It is said, however, that a winter scene with stream, sent at Christmas, 1938, was the first use of the design which appears in a larger block, *Brook in Snow* (1942).

280A Address card: T. W. Nason, R. D. 2, Old Lyme, Connecticut (with a scroll border), copper engraving, 1939, 1 7/16 × 13/16.

375A *Alice R. Smith*, wood engraving (a bookplate), 1944, 5 × 4.

375B *Mrs. M. S. Andrews*, copper engraving (a bookplate) 1944, 3¼ × 2⅛.

392A Christmas card: winter scene, wood engraving, 1946, 1 15/16 × 3⅞. Listed by Francis Comstock in his catalogue of 1968 of Nason's prints. There, he stated that the print was in the Boston Public Library collection. William Fletcher in his revision and expansion of the Comstock catalogue added the information, "few proofs." More recently, Mrs. Nason expressed the belief that there was only one existing impression of this card, the one mentioned by Comstock. The Nasons' Christmas card in 1946 was *Skating*. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a proof of *Skating* on old green paper inscribed "To John Arms. Xmas 1946," as well as an impression on the front of a card-weight folder, sent to John and Dorothy Arms; inside the folder is the inscription, "Christmas Greetings and Best wishes for the New Year from Tom and Margaret. 1946." Impressions of *Skating* are in the Boston Public Library, and a unique proof in colors is owned by Mrs. Nason. Comstock's listings for the year 1946 included, as successive entries:

Christmas Card (Skating scene), wood engraving, 2¼ × 4 3/16, BPL.

Christmas Card (Winter Scene), wood engraving, 1 15/16 × 3⅞, BPL.

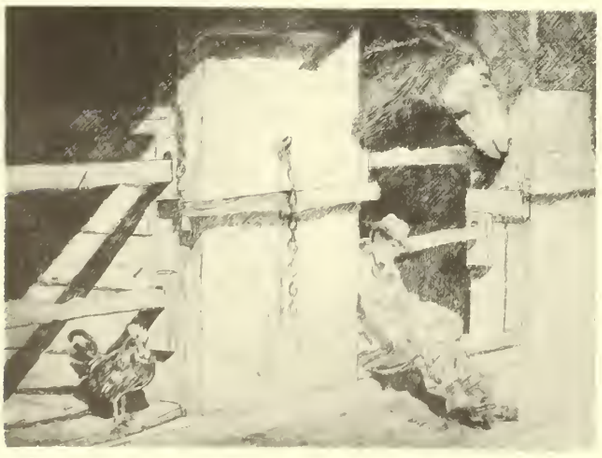
Skating, the first of the two Comstock entries, is engraved with framing lines around it, and proofs exist with the frame, making larger dimensions (2¼ × 4 3/16); there are also proofs in which the framing lines are not inked, and print as a blindstamp, leaving the central inked picture with dimensions of 1⅞ × 3⅞, approximately the same as the dimensions in Comstock's second entry. There is a strong possibility, therefore, that two different printings from the same block were inadvertently listed as separate catalogue entries.

485A *Mrs. Maurice Casalis*, wood engraving (a bookplate), 1950, 3 7/16 × 2 7/16.

123A

279B

116A



306A

313A

RESTRIKES

THE restrikes listed here come from experimental or uncompleted plates. Examining Nason's papers after his death, William Fletcher found a number of plates and brought them to Impressions Workshop in Boston, where a few prints were made from each one. Not listed here (with one exception, No. 171A) are restrikes which exist from several published plates after they were cancelled. An example is the small copper engraving, *Road to the Sea*. Besides the plates listed here, several of special visual interest are a part of the main catalogue: *Dead Trees* (1935), *Place in the Forest* (1937), and *The Woodshed* (1939). In addition, it should be noted that no complete listing of restrikes is possible. The plates of many printmakers of the past are still being printed from; since various Nason blocks and plates exist, there will undoubtedly be restrikes in the future, and there may have been some, in the interval since his death, which are not known to the editor of the present volume. The very careful printing in the past several decades from some of Bewick's original woodblocks are examples of a continuing and natural process, and in each instance the owners of the blocks published them with accompanying descriptions and with the labelling and dating which should accompany all restrikes.

56A *Landscape with House and Trees*, wood engraving, 1925, $2 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$, few proofs. A later, larger version of the design is No. 213. No. 56A is not a restrike but a surviving artist's proof.

116A *Harbor Scene*, drypoint on zinc, 1930, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{5}{16}$, a restrike made at Impressions Workshop, Boston, 1972.

123A *Harbor Scene*, drypoint and etching on zinc, 1931, $7\frac{15}{16} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$, the plate marked by drops of acid. A restrike made at Impressions Workshop, 1972.

124A *Farmhouse, Barn and Road*, etching, 1931, $4 \times 5\frac{7}{8}$, a restrike made at Impressions Workshop, 1972.

171A *Spring on the River*, etching, 1934, $4\frac{11}{16} \times 7\frac{13}{16}$, design in reverse of Catalogue No. 170. A restrike made from the cancelled plate at Impressions Workshop, 1972.

279B *Winter Chores*, copper engraving, 1938, $3\frac{15}{16} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$, a restrike by Impressions Workshop, 1972.

306A *Rest at the Farm*, copper engraving, 1940, $5\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, a restrike by Impressions Workshop, 1972.

313A *Harbor Scene*, etching and drypoint, 1941, $5\frac{13}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$, a restrike by Impressions Workshop, 1972.

313B *Housewife at Rest*, etching and drypoint, 1941, 6×8, a restrike by Impressions Workshop, 1972.

56A

124A

171A

313B

Amston Pond, pencil drawing, $6\frac{1}{16} \times 10\frac{7}{8}$. See No. 424, p. 160.

NOTES ON PRINTING AND PUBLISHING

Prints are listed by catalogue number.

1 Unfinished.
2 Unpublished.
3 Unpublished.
4 Unpublished.
5 The artist's first published print.
6 Unpublished.
7 Unpublished.
8 Unpublished.
11 The first of more than fifty bookplates which Nason designed and engraved. He used woodcut, wood engraving and copper engraving in his exploration of the miniature possibilities of the bookplate, and his work shows a wide range of styles and possibilities.
13 Unpublished.
14 Unpublished.
15 Unpublished.
17 Unpublished. This print and No. 7 are early, experimental versions of the same design and reflect the artist's rapidly growing skill in technique and design; No. 17 is more polished and more concentrated.
18 Unpublished.
19 Unpublished.
20 Unpublished.
21 Unpublished.
22 Unpublished.
23 Unpublished.
33 The first of what was to become an exceptional series of personal Christmas cards. In these, too, evolution was rapid, and the card for 1926, using two prints, Nos. 69 and 70, is one of the finest of a succession which, with an occasional break, continued through 1962.
37 Unpublished.
39 Unpublished.
41 Unpublished.
48 Unpublished.
50 Unpublished.
51 Unpublished.
56 As a boy, the artist had a pet crow and a pet chipmunk. Crow and chipmunk became part of the personal mark or emblem he made for himself. This is the first of a number of variants.
58 Unpublished.
59 Unpublished.
64 Unpublished.
65 A second personal mark, using the crow and chipmunk design. The impression reproduced in this volume was printed in green as a letterhead.
67 A personal mark using only the artist's initials as design.
68 Unpublished.
76 *Autumn Foliage* with its different patterns and values from black to white has a feeling comparable to that of a woven design in a rug or tapestry. The print could be a textbook illustration of the different marks which can be made with a graver or burin.
77 First of Nason's twenty-five chiaroscuro wood engravings.
81 A personal mark in which a burin is imposed on the artist's initials.
88 Unpublished.
90 Commissioned by *The American Printer*, the wood engraving was the dominant feature of a cover design for that magazine, February, 1927, with credits as follows: "Woodcut by Thomas W. Nason, Boston. Typography by E. G. G. [Edmund G. Gress] in Le Mercure and Nicolas Cochin."
94 A larger personal mark, again using the crow and chipmunk design.
95 Traces of pencilled lettering below one impression of the print suggest that it was designed as a headpiece for an advertisement of Nason's work.
98 Unpublished.
99 Nason's address cards, personal marks, and folders advertising his skills, coupled with the Nasons' Christmas cards and personal bookplates and several maps (Nos. 92, 279), are part of a large group of prints intimately connected with his practise of printmaking at home and with the pleasures not only of his art and craft but of the life of a born countryman. Among these prints are self-portraits of the artist at work (Nos. 37 and 89), various labels and emblems including No. 327, *Honey from Shippee Hill*, and portraits of the Nason's dogs, often in Christmas cards but also in the print *Gypsy*, No. 157.
101 Unpublished.
116 Still another variation of Nason's personal mark using the crow and chipmunk design.
124 Made as a specimen of the artist's engraving skills, for the Atlantic Monthly Magazine.
126 Unpublished.
127 Second of the artist's chiaroscuro wood engravings. These are: Nos. 77, 127, 139, 143, 178, 198, 217, 269, 273, 284, 288, 289, 291, 370, 377, 380, 393, 394, 429, 444, 461, 497, 524, 571 and 607.
128 Unpublished. The original block was given by the artist to Burton Emmett.
131 The original block was given to Elmer Adler.
138 Nason's evocation of a grey, dreary day and place is also a virtuoso piece of work on Turkish boxwood with a multiple tool. Its atmosphere and its technique have been subjects of frequent comment by reviewers,

and mention of it will be found in the *Commentary* section in the present volume and in John Taylor Arms' essay, reprinted here, "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason."

143 Two of the six trial proofs are owned by the Boston Public Library. One of them, the gift of Charles D. Childs, is inscribed by the artist, "To Charles D. Childs, Xmas 1932."

144 Unpublished.

146 Unpublished.

147 Unpublished.

150 The original copper plate was given to Edward Morrill.

152 Unpublished.

153 Because the block cracked, this print was never published.

155 Unpublished.

157 Unpublished.

161 Intended by the artist for his own use, but never completed by the engraving of his name.

163 Unpublished.

164 and 165 In *The Spiral Press through Four Decades* (The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 1966), pp. 31–32, discussing the years 1934–1935, Joseph Blumenthal tells the story of these prints:

"The people at Holt proposed a re-issue of Robert Frost's *A Boy's Will* in a new, inexpensive, special edition, with some illustrations. The wood engravings of J. J. Lankes had become rather too closely associated with Frost's work and it seemed time for a change. Thomas W. Nason, a New England artist of great skill, made a drawing of an abandoned fence post with a vine winding through and around it, in close sympathy with the sparse eloquence of Frost's country speech. When cut in wood the venerable fence post decorated the title page of this edition of *A Boy's Will* and the block has several times served as a kind of Frostian symbol on some of the printing I have since done for special Frost occasions. The first sketches for the cover were less successful. Mr. Frost wrote: 'My doubt of the design for the cover is perhaps due to the fact that no grain of any kind has been associated with the scythe in New England or anywhere else in America I think for longer than my lifetime. If the wisp he used for binder had been weedy Joe Pye, Golden Rod or Turtle Dove or even Timothy or Red Top hay I should have been easier in the mind. But I still cling to the idea of a bristle of three or four or five scythes, roughly circular as a whole like a handful grab of jack straws. None of this is too important, but it is a little to me.' Nason finally was able to complete an ingenious grouping of scythes, intertwined, to the delight of the poet and all others concerned."

See *Prizes and Reproductions*.

168 Unpublished.

169 The original copper plate was given to Edward Morrill.

170 Unpublished.

171 Unpublished.

172 Nason engraved the design as a demonstration plate in July 1934 at Wesleyan University and again in 1939 at the New York World's Fair.

174 An electrotype, reduced in size from the original wood engraving, was used to print a letterhead.

176 Nason's bookplates show him using a wide variety of lettering engraved on blocks and plates. In aggregate, there is a great deal of engraved lettering throughout his work. This print is one of the most austere and one of those which places greatest emphasis on the lettering as part of the design.

179 A print which has exceptional richness of color. In a letter to David McCord quoted in the *Commentary* section, Nason speaks of his "use of stiff strong ink". The ink used in printing *Tranquility* seems to be a special mixture made with this print in mind.

181 The print was used in the letterhead and on labels of the Old Lyme Hand Weavers, Inc., Old Lyme, Connecticut.

182 Unpublished.

187 Unpublished.

189 There is a second state of the print which has the title, *The Farm Lane*, engraved in the sky in the upper right corner. Probably only a few proofs were pulled. The plate is still in existence.

190 In a few of his prints from copper Nason aimed not for rich blacks and strong contrasts but instead for a softness of light and atmosphere.

193 Unfinished, unpublished.

195 A demonstration plate at the National Arts Club.

197 A demonstration plate at Grand Central Galleries.

207 A demonstration plate at Grand Central Galleries.

209 During the 1930's, John Taylor Arms also did some miniature landscapes, comparable in size to *Snow in Vermont*. He and Nason often exchanged prints, and their few landscapes in a size this small might well represent experiments which were also a shared interest.

211 Unpublished.

212 Unpublished.

213 A *tour-de-force* in the control of color values in black and white on the surface of the wood block, and a print with an exceptional range of perfectly controlled technique, including the multiple-tool work in the sky.

214 Unpublished.

218 Another of Nason's prints which has soft color values. The artist is able to suggest what Edward Weeks once called the "vinegar sunlight" of the end of a New England winter.

219 Unpublished.

226 There have been few notably successful attempts to illustrate *Walden*. Among them are Thomas Nason's wood engravings in this edition designed by Carl Purington Rollins and published in 1938.

268 Unpublished.

269 Unpublished.

270 Last of a series of prints commissioned to decorate the covers of Houghton Mifflin Company book catalogues. The prints are No. 108, *Spring Plowing* (1929); No. 196, *Elm Tree* (1936); No. 206, *Apple Tree and*

Scythe (1936); and the present entry, *Pine Tree* (1938). Studies of trees are a major theme in Nason's work and one to which he returned frequently. A few of many examples are No. 155, *Willow Stump* (1933); No. 163, *Old Apple Trees* (1934); No. 172, *Study of a Tree* (1934); No. 182, *Study of Trees* (1935); No. 193, *Dead Trees* (1935); and No. 197, *Elm Tree*, made in the same month, January, 1936, as his wood engraving of the same title.

272 Unpublished. Nason sometimes imparted a crisp, almost typographic quality to his wood engravings. Many, like this one, have clear outlines and sharp definition and are ideal for use with type in letterheads, folders, cards, and illustrated books. Two examples are No. 361, *A New England House* (1943) and No. 441, *The Whittier Homestead* (1948).

275 First used by the Lyme Art Association, Lyme, Connecticut, in its printed notices in 1938 and used repeatedly since that time.

278 A study in greys. Nason's *Factory Village* (No. 138) has been noted earlier. The handling of the sky in No. 306, *Barn with Cupola and Weather Vane*, is a notable example of Nason's command of intermediate tones; so are Nos. 316, 322 and 329.

280 Unpublished.

285 Unpublished.

291 The existing prints are from a second printing. The artist printed an edition, was not satisfied with it, destroyed the entire edition, and then printed the present edition.

292 Unfinished.

294 Unpublished.

295 Demonstration plate at the New York World's Fair.

298 Unpublished.

299 A notable example of closing in on a design. Artists have long been familiar with this approach to viewing, and an artist looking at a picture can sometimes be seen with his hands held above and below his face or at either side to frame a picture and mask out parts of the picture itself or of its surroundings. Nason cut away the plate on three sides to press in against the central design. At the same time he did much additional engraved work resulting in subtle changes in color values. He achieved a design of far greater intensity.

303 Demonstration block at Wesleyan University. The design also appears on a New Year's card sent by Helen and George Macy (edition of 200) and was also tipped into a book printed by the Walpole Printing Office with New Year's greetings.

304 "Benson stood over me while I did that," the artist remembered. "There were a lot of us demonstrating. We each had a room. John Arms was giving a lecture upstairs. Dorothy Arms came in with Benson. As they came in, somebody said 'Shhh.' Dorothy said, 'I'm so easily shhhed that I came downstairs.' I was over in a corner. Benson was fascinated. He'd never seen a copper engraving done before."
Samuel Chamberlain also reminiscenced about the day in honor of Benson at the Marblehead Art Association, Marblehead, Massachusetts, in June of 1940. His description will be found in his autobiography, *Etched in Sunlight: Fifty Years in the Graphic Arts* (Boston Public Library, 1968, pp. 108–110.)

306 Unpublished.

309 Unpublished.

314 Demonstration block at Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut.

327 Designed and printed as a label.

330 The original block is owned by the Boston Public Library.

332 Designed for R. H. Valentine and printed as part of a letterhead. A proof of the letterhead is in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

336 By cutting away the plate at bottom, left and top, Nason brought the silo into the center of the picture and gave power to his composition; barn and silo loom much larger in the finished print.

355 Nason, examining photographs sent to him by David McCord, wrote on August 4, 1943: "I think I should prefer the one showing both front and side elevations, as making a stronger composition, even though it does present some fifty or more windows!" See the *Commentary* section.

357 Demonstration block at Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut. The artist commented that he liked this small block better than the larger design (No. 422) based on it.

358 Demonstration plate at Connecticut College.

360 Unpublished.

362 Unpublished.

369 On the title page of *Education, Bricks and Mortar*, Harvard Buildings and Their Contribution to the Advancement of Learning (Cambridge, 1949), a vignette of the cupola of Harvard Hall is used. This appears not to be a separate print by Nason. The book designer masked out most of the design on a proof of No. 369 and had the cupola photographed with a drawn-in, simplified indication of rooflines below it; he also had the cupola somewhat enlarged, to fit his needs for a decorative vignette on the title page.

370 Unpublished. The artist described this print as "never quite finished."

382–389 Phillips Academy reproduced the Nason designs in a series of broadsides with brief essays on various buildings. Folded for mailing, the broadsides were sent to alumni and friends. From the original blocks, prints made and signed by Nason were for sale for many years at the Sales Desk of the Academy's Addison Gallery of American Art.

424 The plate was cancelled by the artist.

444 A remarkable balance is struck here between the wood engraving and the type. The result reflects a happy and particularly successful collaboration between Nason as engraver and Carl Purington Rollins as typographer.

480 "I did the drypoint," Nason wrote to Arthur Heintzelman on November 15, 1950, "from a sketch which I made on the Broadhead in Pennsylvania while we were on a fishing trip with the Elys (whom

you met the other day) and the figure is Page Ely. I scraped off most of the burr as I wanted a light effect."

481 Unpublished.

483 Engraved for the artist's sister-in-law, Mrs. A. S. Ormsby.

492 Unpublished.

508 Unpublished.

521 See Nason's comment on this print, quoted in the *Commentary* section from his letter of 20 December 1954 to David McCord.

523 Nason's detailed comments on printing this block are quoted in the *Commentary* section from a letter to David McCord, October 19, 1954.

539 Dramatic sky and light and the visual suggestion of gusts of wind in the trees give this print tension and visual interest. The sky becomes the focus of the print. Nason's desire to carry an earlier design, *Building the Stack*, No. 380, to a different level of feeling offers insight into his way of judging a design.

541 Nason's wood engraving was reproduced in reduced size on the Colonial Society of Massachusetts notice of its meeting of February 27, 1958. A note on the print, included in the notice, said in part: "The wood engraving by Thomas W. Nason which is reproduced on the cover of this notice was commissioned by the Society as a gift to Mrs. Llewellyn Howland, who gave the house to the Society. Mr. Nason has pulled fifty additional proofs from the block, . . . These signed proofs, suitably matted for framing, may be purchased by members of the Society for $10.00 each."

570–573 For years, impressions of these prints made and signed by the artist were offered for sale by Old Sturbridge Village.

602 The artist commented that Mrs. Macauley, who commissioned the print, "wanted just one proof. I gave her the plate, too."

608 Unpublished.

610 Unpublished.

Offshore Islands, pen and watercolor drawing, $8\frac{5}{8} \times 15\frac{7}{8}$. See No. 520, p. 179.

THE SETTINGS OF THE PRINTS

Prints are listed by catalogue number.

1 Based on a photograph taken by the artist during his residence in the Philippines.
2 Alstead, New Hampshire, based on a sketch made in 1920.
3 Alstead, New Hampshire.
4 New Hampshire.
5 Boston.
6 Boston.
7 Plymouth, Massachusetts.
9 Boston.
10 Plymouth County, Massachusetts.
13 Boston. "The Old Tavern," Nason wrote to Arthur Heintzelman in a letter of 7 May 1945, "is a view looking down to Howard Street, somewhere back of Goodspeed's old place near the Court House."
14 Boston.
15 Boston.
16 Belmont, Massachusetts.
17 Plymouth, Massachusetts.
18 Boston.
19 Boston.
20 Boston. In addition to the title identifying the real location of the scene, *Province Steps, Boston*, Nason recorded an imaginary title, *Old Primrose Court Steps and Gate*. See No. 49, below.
21 Boston.
22 Boston.
23 Boston.
34 Boston.
37 Boston. The artist had converted the top floor of 63 River Street, where he and his wife lived, into a studio. Later he remembered, "I had a pupil then – myself."
38 Boston.
40 Rockport, Massachusetts.
41 Based on a photograph taken by the artist in Venice in 1913.
43 Boston.
44 Boston. "Webster Avenue was a scene in the North End; I don't know if it still exists," wrote the artist to Arthur Heintzelman in a letter of 7 May 1945.
45 New Hampshire.
46 Near Belmont, Massachusetts. Probably a preliminary drawing was made during a day of sketching in the company of Percy Grassby, who also made a print of willows near Belmont.
47 The Stearn House, Hancock, New Hampshire.
49 A view from the Boston bank of the Charles River in Boston. "Primrose Court was an imaginary title although a real place, somewhere near the Esplanade at the foot of Beacon Hill – in that neighborhood," wrote Nason to Arthur Heintzelman in a letter of 7 May 1945.
50 Boston.
51 Gloucester, Massachusetts.
52 Charles Street, Boston.
57 Digby, Nova Scotia.
58 Charlestown, New Hampshire.
59 Based on a photograph taken by the artist near Oxford in Oxfordshire.
62 Digby, Nova Scotia.
63 Digby, Nova Scotia.
64 Boston.
68 California. The trees, Nason noted in his *Chronological List* of February 1945, are eucalyptus trees.
69 Boston.
70 Boston.
75 A design growing out of the design of *Clam Digger's Shack*, No. 57, a house which Nason saw in Digby, Nova Scotia.
76 New Hampshire.
77 Massachusetts.
79 Nova Scotia.
80 Near Tyler Street, Chinese Quarter, Boston.
83 Boston.
88 Stonington, Maine.
89 The artist in his studio on the top floor of 63 River Street, Boston.
91 Maine.
92 Deer Isle, Maine.
93 Redondo, California.
98 Redondo, California.
99 Reading, Massachusetts.
101 Boston.
102 Maine.
111 New Hampshire.
112 Connecticut.
113 Lyme, Connecticut.
118 Connecticut.
119 Boston.
120 Ipswich, Massachusetts.
125 Marblehead, Massachusetts.
127 Marblehead, Massachusetts.
129 Newcastle, New Hampshire.
131 Concord, Massachusetts. An impression at the New York Public Library is titled *Hawthorne's Old Manse, Concord, Mass.*
133 New Hampshire.
134 New Hampshire.
135 Lyme, Connecticut.
140 Billerica, Massachusetts.
141 Wilmington, Massachusetts.

142 Lyme, Connecticut.
145 Deer Isle, Maine.
148 Lincoln, Massachusetts.
149 Lyme, Connecticut.
153 The Berkshires in Massachusetts.
155 West Newbury, Massachusetts.
156 Cummington, Massachusetts.
159 Reading, Massachusetts.
162 Reading, Massachusetts.
163 On the ridge of the Nason land in Lyme, Connecticut, as it was when they came, before they built the house.
166 Lynn, Massachusetts.
167 Reading, Massachusetts.
173 Vermont.
178 Vermont.
179 Vermont.
180 Maine coast.
184 Reading, Massachusetts.
186 Massachusetts.
188 Connecticut.
189 Connecticut.
190 Ipswich, Massachusetts.
192 Ipswich, Massachusetts.
199 Haddam, Connecticut.
207 Maine.
208 Ipswich, Massachusetts.
209 Vermont.
210 New Hampshire.
213 Maine.
215 Connecticut.
216 New Hampshire.
218 The Berkshires, Massachusetts.
220 Elmer Adler's home at Erwinna, Pennsylvania.
221 Deerfield, Massachusetts.
226–267 Before beginning these wood engravings illustrating Thoreau's *Walden*, the artist explored the surroundings of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, and made sketchbook drawings.
269 Bucks County, Pennsylvania.
271 The Poconos, Pennsylvania.
272 Connecticut.
273 Bucks County, Pennsylvania.
274 Hebron, Connecticut.
275 Old Lyme, Connecticut.
278 Shippee Hill, Joshuatown, Lyme, Connecticut.
279 Lyme, Connecticut.
281 Bucks County, Pennsylvania.
282 Pennsylvania.
284 Delaware River, Pennsylvania.
286 Connecticut.
287 Penobscot Bay, Maine.
291 Lyme, Connecticut.
292 Connecticut.
293 The Berkshires, Massachusetts.
296 Pennsylvania.
297 Connecticut.
298 Lyme, Connecticut.
299 Connecticut.
300 Deer Isle, Maine.
301 Pennsylvania.
302 Connecticut.
311 Maine.
312 Vermont.
313 Connecticut.
315 Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.
316 Connecticut.
323 Vermont.
324 Deer Isle, Maine.
325 Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.
330 Connecticut.
331 East Hampton, Connecticut.
332 East Hampton, Connecticut.
333 Connecticut.
334 Connecticut.
335 Connecticut.
336 Connecticut.
355 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
356 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
357 Maine.
362 Connecticut.
363 Lyme, Connecticut.
364 Lyme, Connecticut.
366 Lyme, Connecticut.
369 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
372 Connecticut.
373 Connecticut. The Hatt Farm.
377 Connecticut River Valley.
378 The Berkshires, Massachusetts.
379 Connecticut.
380 Connecticut.
382–389 Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.
390 Connecticut.
391 Connecticut.
393 Connecticut.
394 Darien, Connecticut.
396 Cummington, Massachusetts.
421 Connecticut.
422 Deer Isle, Maine.
423 Darien, Connecticut.
424 Connecticut.
426 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
427 House of Robert Brackman, the portrait painter, in Noank, Connecticut.
432 Colchester, Connecticut.
433 A view of Harvard Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Harvard series of wood engravings, commissioned by David McCord on behalf of a number of Harvard projects, were based on photographs provided by McCord. There are 28 prints in all: Nos. 355, 356, 369, 426, 433–440, 447–459, 463, 523 and 592. Glimpses of the planning and execution of these commissions will be found in the *Commentary* section, later in this volume, in the selections from letters between Nason and McCord.
434 The John Harvard Chapel, Southwark Cathedral, London.
435 John Harvard's Chambers in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire.
436 The only surviving book from John Harvard's library.
437 The old Gore Hall Library at Harvard University

stood in Harvard Yard from 1841 to 1913. It occupied part of the site of the presentday Widener Library. Nason's print shows the original building of 1841–1876 before additions and alterations.

438–440 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

441 Haverhill, Massachusetts.

445 Vermont.

446 Vermont.

447–455 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

456–459 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

461 Connecticut.

463 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

480 Page Ely fishing on the Broadhead River, Pennsylvania.

481 Lyme, Connecticut.

482 "Brooksound," Lyme, Connecticut.

483 Deer Isle, Maine.

484 The print is reproduced on the dust jacket of David McCord's *A Star by Day* with the title, printed on the jacket flap, "Mt. Ktaadn: A Woodcut By Thomas W. Nason, N. A." Nevertheless, there is some uncertainty about the setting of the print. Nason's records concerning it were kept in a folder marked "Mt. Chocorua," and a drawing and a proof each are marked Mt. Chocorua. Letters between McCord and Nason, from 1944 to 1948, discussed a broadside, never printed, which would present McCord's sonnet on Chocorua and a wood engraving (always mentioned as a future undertaking) of Chocorua by Nason. In January, 1945, the artist sent the poet a preliminary drawing.

487 Lyme, Connecticut.

488 Old Lyme, Connecticut.

489 The artist wrote of *A New England Stream*: "This is based upon a sketch made a few years ago in that part of Vermont where the numerous little streams, arising in the hills of the Green Mountain range, make their way southward and eastward, widening out as they flow through the more level grazing land. I have tried to convey something of the feeling of this region and its typical features such as the isolated farm in the distance and the inevitable pasture elm towering above the lesser trees along the margin of the brook. It could be any one of a dozen scenes to be found in that part of New England."

490 Old Lyme, Connecticut.

497 Elmer Adler's home and graphic arts center, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

498 Lyme, Connecticut.

503–507 Columbia University, New York City.

511–519 Columbia University, New York City.

520 Stonington Harbor, Maine.

521 The Ely House, North Pomfret, Vermont.

522 Elmer Adler's house, Erwinna, Pennsylvania.

523 Radcliffe College, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

528 Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

529 Connecticut.

530 Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

531 Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

534 Old Lyme, Connecticut.

535 Topsfield, Massachusetts.

536 Boston.

537 Hamburg, Connecticut, a part of the town of Lyme shown on Nason's *Map of the Lyme area*, No. 279.

538 Columbia University, New York City.

539 Connecticut.

540 Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

541 Boston, Massachusetts.

542 Doorway of the Nason House in Lyme, Connecticut.

568 Looking out a window of the Nason house in Lyme, Connecticut.

570–573 Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts.

581 Lyme, Connecticut.

582 A window of the Nason House in Lyme, Connecticut.

592 Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

593 Boscobel Restoration. The house had been moved in 1955 from Crugers, New York, to Garrison-on-Hudson, opposite West Point.

594 Little Rock, Arkansas.

599 Florence Griswold House, Old Lyme, Connecticut. Miss Griswold took boarders, among them Hassam, Ranger and other artists who came to Lyme. The print was commissioned for the Old Lyme Historical Society, which now owns the house, by Nelson White.

600 Little Rock, Arkansas.

602 Old Lyme, Connecticut.

607 Haverford, Pennsylvania.

608 Old Lyme, Connecticut.

610 The Berkshires, Massachusetts.

House in Lyme, pen and grey wash drawing, $11\frac{3}{16} \times 16\frac{3}{4}$.

PRIZES AND REPRODUCTIONS

8 *The Century Magazine* for November, 1923, presented a group of Nason's prints in reproduction – Nos. 8, 15, 16, 17, and 18. These were his first prints to be reproduced and his first public notice. In the same month, Goodspeed's Book Shop held three exhibitions of prints – by Piranesi, by Prout, and by contemporary printmakers, including Nason. The exhibitions were reviewed in the *Boston Evening Transcript* of November 14, 1923. Nason's *Faneuil Hall, Boston* (No. 15) was reproduced, and a paragraph was devoted to his work: "The modern workers are not neglected. A new man makes his appearance with a sheaf of wood cuts. Thomas Nason's prints of Boston scenes have much distinction. With a noteworthy directness he shows examples of New England architecture. Faneuil Hall, Howard Street gables, Massachusetts General Hospital and Charles Street Jail are effectively set forth."

10 At the New York Public Library is a fine group of Nason's early woodcuts, matted in three mats with multiple openings. These prints are from the years 1922 through 1925 and may have been offered to the New York Public Library in their present mats as a first representation of his work. Nason had assembled a first portfolio of his prints in 1923, and from it *The Century* selected the five prints it reproduced in 1923. The prints represented together in the three mats at the New York Public Library are Nos. 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 44, 49 and 60.

35 Reproduced in Samuel Chamberlain's *Fair Is Our Land* (New York, Hastings House, 1942).

39 Reproduced in *The Sunday Star*, Washington, D.C., August 7, 1949, as part of a review of an one-man show of Nason's prints at Alfred Fowler's print gallery.

40 Awarded first prize in *A Special Exhibition of Lithographs, Wood Blocks and Linoleum Cuts*, April – May, 1925, National Arts Club Galleries, New York.

44 Reproduced as part of the article, "Wood Engraving and the Work of Thomas Nason," *The Print Connoisseur*, January, 1926. Also reproduced were Nos. 45, 49, 52, 57, and 63. Also reproduced in an exhibition leaflet in January: *Block Prints and Wood Cuts by Contemporary Artists at Goodspeed's, 9A Ashburton Place, Boston, January 25–February 6, 1926.*

45 This print marked the beginning of gallery recognition of the artist, and it forecast his future as a printmaker. As mentioned in the previous entry, it was reproduced in *The Print Connoisseur* in January, 1926. It was chosen for *The Woodcut of Today at Home and Abroad*, London, 1927; chosen as best print in *Esposition de la Gravure Moderne Americaine* at the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, July 3–31, 1928; shown in the *Exhibition of Contemporary American Prints* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, May–June, 1929, and in the travelling exhibition, *Fifty Modern American Blockprints*, 1932. It was many times exhibited in the years following. It was reproduced in *Harper's* for June, 1933, with acknowledgment to Weyhe Galleries, and its appearances in catalogues addressed to the print market included reproduction in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, June, 1930, and *Goodspeed's Catalogue 311*, 1939. A reproduction of the print was published by Charles L. Rumrill & Co., Rochester, New York, in 1941.

46 Reproduced in *Goodspeed's Christmas Catalogue of Books and Prints*, 1927.

49 *The Print Connoisseur*, January, 1926.

52 *The Print Connoisseur*, January, 1926; also illustrated in Harley Perkins' "Boston Notes, Harvard Number," *The Arts*, December, 1926, p. 339.

57 *The Print Connoisseur*, January, 1926.

62 One of the *Fifty Prints of the Year*, American Institute of Graphic Arts, Second Annual Exhibition, 1926–1927. Reproduced in the *New York Evening Post Literary Review*, November 6, 1926; in *The New York Times*, November 7, 1926; and in "Books found on my desk," by E. G. G. (Edmund G. Gress), *The American Printer*, December, 1926.

63 *The Print Connoisseur*, January, 1926. Also included, in a printing from the original block, in Louis Holman's *The Graphic Processes* (Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed & Co., 1926), and reproduced with a review of the publication in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 8, 1927. Reproduced, also, in Samuel Chamberlain's *Fair Is Our Land* (New York: Hastings House, 1942).

70 Nason's woodcut of carollers was reproduced in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 24, 1926, with the caption: "A Wood Cut by Thomas Nason, Also of Boston, at the Lower Right Shows the Carolers on Beacon Hill."

76 Reproduced in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, November 26, 1927. Shown in the Second Annual Exhibition of American Block Prints, The Print Club of Philadelphia, February, 1928. A reviewer in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, February 5, 1928, wrote that Nason's prints in the exhibition, *On the Maine Coast* and *Autumn Foliage*, "hew out in intricate hatchings their landscape story." Reproduced in *The New Wood Cut*, 1930 (M. Salaman, London).

79 Reproduced in "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason" by John Taylor Arms, *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.

84 Reproduced in *The New York Sun*, August 27, 1927.

91 A reviewer in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, February 5, 1928, noted that the print "is quiet, almost stark in its color sense, gaining its contrasts through the skilful manipulation of black and white" and went on to say that the print "is interesting to compare with a modern geometric rendition of house and land forms. The modern places particular emphasis upon the geometry, while the more traditional technician relies upon the geometry of his craftsmanship to build his story for him." *On the Maine Coast* was chosen for the Third Annual Exhibition, *Fifty Prints of the Year*, 1927, The American Institute of Graphic Arts, and mentioned in *The New York Times*, October 30, 1927, and June 24, 1928. It was chosen by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for the Exhibition of Contemporary American Prints, May 14–June 22, 1929, and purchased as best print of the show.

96 Reproduced in 1927 on the cover of the folder, *Exhibition of Wood Engravings by Thomas Nason*, Goodspeed's, Ashburton Pl., Boston, March 6th to April 1st.

102 Awarded the Mildred Boericke Prize at the Annual Exhibition of American Wood Blocks at the Print Club of Philadelphia, 1929. Chosen by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for the Exhibition of Contemporary American Prints, May 14–June 22, 1929. Awarded the Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Logan Second Prize at the First International Exhibition of Lithography and Wood Engraving at the Art Institute of Chicago, 1929. Reproduced in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, March 10, 1929; in *The Art Digest*, March, 1929; in *The Boston Herald*, April 7, 1929; and in the *Boston Sunday Post*, January 19, 1930.

112 Awarded Second Prize in the Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Boston Society of Independent Artists, February, 1930. Used as cover illustration for *Wings*, magazine of the Literary Guild of America, April, 1931.

113 Chosen by the Art Institute of Chicago for its international exhibition of lithographs and woodcuts, 1930. Reproduced in *The Chicago Evening Post Magazine of the Art World*, January 21, 1930; in "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason" by John Taylor Arms, *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937; in "Thomas W. Nason, Poet Engraver of New England," by Stephen Renwick, *American Artist*, November, 1942; and in Watson and Kent's *The Relief Print* (New York, Watson-Guptill Publications, 1945. Chosen for the Exhibition of One Hundred Contemporary Prints at the Institute of Modern Art, Boston, 1940.

118 Awarded the Mildred Boericke Prize at the Annual Exhibition of American Wood Blocks at The Print Club of Philadelphia, 1930. A review of the show in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, March 16, 1930, called the print "strikingly simple and technically fine." Reproduced in the *New York Herald Tribune*, June 29, 1930. When the Philadelphia exhibition of American wood block prints was sent to the Brooklyn Museum, Elizabeth Luther Cary reviewed the show in *The New York Times*, July 27, 1930. The award of the Mildred Boericke Prize for the best print in the exhibition, she wrote, "reflects an extremely austere and aristocratic taste on the part of the jury. The artist, Thomas W. Nason, has a thoroughly established reputation for dignified simplicity of effect and an orderly and logical statement of his subject. Nothing we have seen hitherto has been, however, so eloquent in restraint, so clean and delicate in execution, so composed in mood as this small print, 'Farm Buildings,' which wears its honor as a nun her coif." The print was used by the Castleton China Company as a design for a dinner plate in its series of American Artist Dinner Ware. Dorothy Adlow reproduced the print and discussed it in *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 17, 1936.

119 Reproduced in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 2, 1930. Chosen one of the Fifty Prints of the Year, 1931. Awarded Second Prize in the Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Boston Society of Independent Artists, March, 1931. An illustration in *Understanding Prints*, by Aline Kistler (New York, Associated American Artists, 1936). Reproduced in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, February 1, 1936, with a caption noting title, medium and artist and stating: "Part of the Section of Boston Santayana describes in his novel."

120 Reproduced in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, February 14, 1931, and in Alice Lee Parker's article, "American Prints To Be Shown in Italy," *American Magazine of Art*, October, 1931. Awarded the Purchase Prize of the Northwest Printmakers, 1932. Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, March, 1933.

122 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, November, 1937.

126 Used as an illustration by the Macbeth Gallery, New York. Nason's new prints were exhibited there, December 8–31, 1931. A reviewer in *The New York Times* of December 12, 1931, wrote: "He carves the rolling Berkshire foothills, the clapboard houses of a New Hampshire town, the elms and maples of Marblehead with a strong sense of the Doric beauty of the New England scene."

129 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, 1931, p. 47. Reproduced in a Macbeth Gallery advertisement in *Prints* for November 1931 and again in the issue of May, 1932. Illustrated in an advertisement of the Cabot Paint Company in *Architectural Forum*, *Architectural Record*, 1935.

130 Awarded the Purchase Prize of the Northwest Printmakers, 1933. The Northwest Printmakers had established a permanent collection of prints in the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, to which purchases were added. Reproduced in *The Art Digest*, June 1, 1932. Reproduced in the Dallas *Journal*, October 8, 1935.

132 The print was published in 1936 as a commission from the Albany Print Club. It was reproduced in *Prints*, December, 1936, and in *Art Digest*, March 15, 1937.

133 Chosen one of the *Fifty Prints of the Year*, 1932, American Institute of Graphic Arts. Reproduced in *The Art Digest*, March 1, 1932.

134 This print and No. 142 together were awarded the

138 *Factory Village*

City of Warsaw Prize and *Diplôme d'Honneur* in the First International Exhibition of Wood Engraving at Warsaw, Poland, 1933. Reproduced in the Dallas *Herald*, October 6, 1935, with note of the opening of an exhibition of forty wood engravings by Nason at the Dallas Art Museum. Reproduced by the American Artists Group as one of their Christmas cards, with copyright by the artist in 1935.

135 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, June, 1932. A Goodspeed's advertisement in *Prints*, March, 1932, included recommendation of the print to collectors.

138 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, March, 1933, and in "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason" by John Taylor Arms, *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.

139 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, March, 1933.

141 Used as a cover illustration for *The Month at Goodspeed's*, December, 1932. Also illustrated on the cover of *Exhibition and Sale, Woodcuts & Line Engravings by Thomas W. Nason*, Goodspeed's, 7 Ashburton Place, Boston, December 2d to 31st 1935. Several one-man exhibitions had preceded the exhibition of 1935. A writer in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 11, 1933, noted that "now for the first time, and at Goodspeed's Print Shop, Mr. Nason is represented in a one-man exhibition. It is such a grouping as must surprise in its extent, variety and quality, even those who have followed this artist's work during the brief decade that it has enjoyed." Another showing was reported in the *Newsletter* of the Art Institute of Chicago, July 9, 1933: "The black and white wood-block prints, or wood engravings, by Thomas W. Nason, the New England artist, are much admired by visitors to the Print Galleries of the Art Institute. They are small engravings, some of them so fine and delicate, and possessing such a delightful charm, that they might be mistaken for copper plate etchings. Many of them already have been sold, the modest price and high quality of the work attracting numerous patrons." *The Wheelwright's* was also illustrated by Goodspeed's in its Catalogue 311, 1939: *Fine Prints, Engravings and Drawings*, Exhibition and Sale.

142 With No. 131, awarded the City of Warsaw Prize and *Diplôme d'Honneur* in the First International Exhibition of Wood Engraving at Warsaw, Poland, 1933.

148 Reproduced in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 11, 1933, and in *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 8, 1936. Reproduced by The American Artists Group as one of their Christmas cards, 1936. Also reproduced in *The Reading Chronicle*, April 3, 1936, accompanying an article reporting the artist's election to the National Academy of Design. One of the *Fifty Prints*, 1938; reproduced in *The Art Digest*, May 15, 1938, as one of the illustrations of an article headed, '"Fifty Prints," Picked by Three Museum-Men, Reveal Vital Trends'.

149 Fine Prints of the Year, 1933 (Studio Press, London), Plate 87. A drawing by Nason of *Finnegan's Hovel* was reproduced in *American Artist*, January, 1944, p. 26. Another, of the same subject, was one of a group of eleven of his drawings presented to the Boston Public Library by the artist in 1966.

151 Published by The Woodcut Society, Kansas City, with an introduction by John Taylor Arms, the print was reproduced in *Fine Prints*, October, 1934, and in *Prints*, November, 1934. It was also reproduced in Arms' "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.

156 One of four wood engravings by Nason in the Exhibition of Fine Art, U. S. A., assembled by the Art Institute of Chicago and shown in the galleries of the Century of Progress Exposition. Reproduced in *Prints*, December, 1935; on the cover of *The Month at Goodspeed's*, November, 1935; in the *Boston Sunday Post*, December 8, 1935; in Goodspeed's Catalogue 311, *Fine Prints, Engravings & Drawings*, 1939; and in *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 20, 1946.

158 Voted best print at the Century of Progress, World's Fair Exposition, 1934, second section. Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, February, 1934. Reproduced by the American Artists Group as one of their Christmas cards, copyright 1935 by the artist.

159 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, November, 1935. Also reproduced by the American Artist Group as one of their Christmas cards, 1936.

160 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, November, 1937.

162 One of the *Fifty Prints of the Year*, 1935. The American Art Dealers Association had replaced the American Institute of Graphic Arts as backer of the exhibition, which was held at the Grant Gallery in Manhattan and was reviewed in *The New York Times*, May 2, 1935. Awarded the Judges' Grand Prize by the Los Angeles Art Association, 1935, in the exhibition,

"Prints of Living Americans." Reproduced in "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," by John Taylor Arms, *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.

164 See *Notes on Printing and Publishing*. On February 2, 1935, Robert Frost wrote to the artist, referring to the prints which in the present catalogue are Nos. 165 and 164: "The scythes and the post were just what I wanted for the book. I can't thank you enough." No. 164 was used on the title page of the 1934 edition of *A Boy's Will* (New York: Henry Holt & Co.), printed by the Spiral Press, and became for The Spiral Press, in the words of Joseph Blumenthal, "a kind of Frostian symbol on some of the printing I have since done for special Frost occasions." It appears on a Grolier Club announcement: *Four American Poets, Stephen Vincent Benét, Robert Frost, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Edwin Arlington Robinson, The Grolier Club, November Sixteenth, 1939*; the Club held an exhibition, and Robert Frost gave a reading. It was used also on the cover of *Robert Frost, March 26, 1959*, issued for the poet's eighty-fifth birthday; on the title page, *Memorial Service*, Amherst, Massachusetts, February 17, 1963, following Frost's death; on the cover of a card bringing Greetings and Holiday Good Wishes 1963–1964 from Ann and Joseph Blumenthal; and on the cover of *Thomas W. Nason* 1889–1971, with a tribute by Clare Leighton. All were printed by the Spiral Press, as was Joseph Blumenthal's *The Spiral Press Through Four Decades* (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1966), in which the print is illustrated. See *Notes on Printing and Publishing*.

165 Used as a stamped design on the cover of the 1934 edition of *A Boy's Will*.

166 Chosen for the American Block Calendar, 1937, printed by the Gutenberg Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

167 Reproduced in John Taylor Arms' article, "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937; by the American Artists Group as one of their Christmas cards, 1937; and in *The New York Times*, November 24, 1940, with the caption, '"Memories of a way of life that is our own"–"Early Snow," by T. W. Nason.'

169 *Fine Prints of the Year*, 1934, Plate 84.

173 Chosen for the *Third International Exhibition of Etching and Engraving*, Chicago, 1935.

178 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, March, 1935, and in John Taylor Arms' "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.

179 Reproduced on the cover of *The Month at Goodspeed's*, May, 1935. Chosen best print in the Texas Centennial Exposition, 1936.

184 Reproduced in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, Magazine Section, December 7, 1935, illustrating William Germain Dooley's article, "New England by a Modern Print Master." Reproduced on the 1936 exhibition notice, *Gems in Black and White by Childe Hassam and Thomas Nason*, Grand Central Art Galleries, Inc., March 3rd until 21st. Also reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, April, 1936, and Goodspeed's Catalogue 311, *Fine Prints, Engravings & Drawings*, 1939. Plate 80 in *Fine Prints of the Year*, 1936.

185 Reproduced in *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 1936, and in John Taylor Arms' "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937. Chosen by Connoisseur Publications, Inc., for their portfolio of American artists.

186 Awarded the prize, by visitors ballot, at the Fourth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Woodcuts, arranged by The Woodcut Society in Kansas City in 1936. Also awarded Honorable Mention at the Second International Exhibition of Wood Engraving at Warsaw, Poland, 1936. Chosen for the XXI Biennial at Venice, Art in the United States, 1938. Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, November, 1935; in *The Woodcut Bulletin*, No. 6, 1936; by the National Academy of Design, 1936; by the Grand Central Art Galleries in their portfolio of great American prints; in John Taylor Arms' article, "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937; in "Woodcuts" by Ralph M. Pearson in

213 *On the Island*

the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1939, and as part of an article on the artist in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V: 3, 1946.

188 Reproduced in Arms' "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.

189 Awarded the John Taylor Arms Prize at the Twentieth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Etchers, 1935. Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, December, 1935; in Arms' article, "The Engravings of Thomas W. Nason," *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937; and in the catalogue of a Nason exhibition held by the Kleeman Gallery, New York, in March, 1939.

191 Chosen for the XXI Biennial of Venice, Art of the United States, 1938.

192 Reproduced on an exhibition notice, *Woodcuts & Line Engravings by Thomas Nason at Goodspeed's*, 7 Ashburton Place, Boston, Mass., December 2d to 31st, 1935.

198 Reproduced in Philip Brooks' review of *The Colophon*, New Series, No. 4, *The New York Times Book Review*, June 28, 1936.

199 The Third Annual Award Print, 1936, of the Rochester Print Club. Judged best print in the Rochester Print Club's Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition, 1931–1951.

206 Reproduced on the covers of Houghton Mifflin & Company's *Autumn Books* catalogue, 1936, and *Summer Books*, 1941.

208 Reproduced as one of the Christmas cards of the American Artists Group, 1937; in Thomas Craven's *A Treasury of American Prints* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), plate 76; in *The New York Times Book Review*, November 19, 1939; and in *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 6, 1942.

212 Reproduced on the cover of *Exhibition of Prints by Thomas W. Nason, A. N. A.*, March 3d to 31st, 1937, Grand Central Art Galleries, New York.

213 Chosen as best of the One Hundred Prints of the Year by the Art Institute of Chicago, 1937; reproduced in *Art Digest*, March 15, 1937, and in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, June, 1937. Chosen for the XXI Venice Biennial *Art of the United States*, 1938.

215 Chosen for the XXI Venice Biennial *Art of the United States*, 1938. Reproduced in *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 9, 1938.

216 Reproduced in reviews of *A Mighty Fortress* in *The New York Times Book Review* and *New York Herald Tribune Books*, both of May 23, 1947, and both with note of its use in the jacket design of the book.

217 Reproduced in *Art Digest*, September, 1937, and in *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, October, 1937.

218 Reproduced in the magazine *Progressive Farmer and Southern Baptist*, 1938.

220 Reproduced in Samuel Chamberlain's *Fair Is Our Land* (New York: Hastings House, 1942).

222 Reproduced in *Boekcier*, the Dutch publication dealing with bookplates, 1 April 1938.

225 Reproduced in *Prints*, February, 1938, in an article on bookplates. The article cited, though it did not reproduce, No. 224, *El Libro de Carl Tilden Keller:* "Thomas W. Nason is one of our most versatile men working on both wood and copper. His masterpiece is the plate for the collection of Don Quixote belonging to Carl Tilden Keller."

233 Reproduced in "Thomas W. Nason, Poet Engraver of New England," by Stephen Renwick, *American Artist*, November, 1942.

265 Reproduced in *The New York Times Book Review*, May 20, 1951, illustrating "The Steady Fascination of Thoreau," a review by Joseph Wood Krutch of *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau* edited by Bradford Torrey and published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

271 Reproduced in *Art Digest*, August 1, 1939.

273 Chosen for the XXI Venice Biennial, *Art of the United States*, 1938. Reproduced in Renwick's article of November, 1942, in *American Artist*, and in Watson and Kent's *The Relief Print* (1945).

274 Awarded the Kate W. Arms Memorial Prize, 1938, for the best print by a member of the Society of American Etchers. Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, January, 1939; in *The Daily Pantagraph*, Bloomington Illinois, March 15, 1939; *The Boston Herald*, July 21, 1940; *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 20, 1941; and in Renwick's article of November, 1942, in *American Artist*. Also reproduced in the Renwick article were Nos. 287 and 290.

281 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, April, 1939, and in Samuel Chamberlain's *Fair Is Our Land* (New York: Hastings House, 1942).

287 Reproduced in *The New York Times*, December 3, 1939, and in *Twelve Artists in Six Media*, Kennedy Gallery, New York, October, 1946.

288 Reproduced in *The New York Times*, November 19, 1939.

290 Reproduced on the cover of *The Month at Goodspeed's*, March, 1940, and by the American Artists Group in the same year as one of their Christmas cards.

291 Chosen by the National Committee of Engraving for the exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., in November, 1940. Leila Mechlin, reviewing the exhibition in the *Washington Star* of November 24, commented that "The exhibition of 100 prints by as many artists, representing three centuries of printmaking in the United States, . . . is of exceptional interest and importance." *Summer Storm* was reproduced with her review. Awarded Honorable Mention by the Washington Printmakers, 1940. One of the prints in the I. B. M. Corporation's exhibition, *American Printmaking: Prints by One Hundred and One American Artists of Three Centuries*, 1941; chosen, also, for the exhibition *Arte Grafico del Hemisferio Occidental*, 1941. One of "Fifty Best American Prints," an exhibition organized by the National Artists for Victory Committee and shown in London, Edinburgh and other cities of Great Britain beginning June 1, 1944. Given the Special Award of the Audubon Artists, 1946. Dorothy Adlow, reviewing in *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 17, 1942, an exhibition of oils, watercolors and prints by living American artists at the Currier Gallery, Manchester, New Hampshire,

wrote: 'The wood-engraving, "Summer Storm," by Thomas W. Nason, reveals once again the superb craftsmanship of one of our greatest living wood-engravers.' The commentary on *Summer Storm* (*Tempestad de Verano*) in *Arte Grafico del Hemisferio Occidental* is one of the most eloquent statements on the artist's work and is here reprinted in full:

"Entre los muchos artistas dedicados a los trabajos en madera, y entre los que al presente se ocupan del paisaje de Nueva Inglaterra, ninguno ha expresado el espíritu de su obra de modo tan completo como Thomas W. Nason en sus grabados en cobre y madera. *Tempestad de Verano* muestra esas cualidades de restricción, simplicidad, claridad y honestidad que distinguen la obra de Nason, y no es, sin embargo, un grabado simple. En verdad es, técnicamente, un recorrido vigoroso que nadie, sino un maestro en el arte de grabar, puede ejecutar con éxito. La cualidad de simplicidad está por lo tanto, no en el método sino en la concepción. Resulta que de esta tan completa integración de todos los elementos, la impresión transmitida es pura como un cristal y sin complicaciones.

"Fueron necesarios cuatro bloques para producir este grabado que está dentro de la tradición del claroscuro del siglo XVI. La estructura de los diseños en negro ha sido enriquecida por la adición de bloques para producir tonos, sobrepuestos como en otras estampas iluminadas, pero usados aquí más para obtener una modulación sutil en la riqueza de tonos, que como un medio de una completa composición de colores. Esta restricción en el uso de una técnica tan elaborada es característica de Nason, quien no escatima esfuerzos para expresar su fantasia, y sin embargo siempre manifiesta una modesta y aparentemente natural ilusión de la realidad.

"Thomas Nason nacio en Massachusetts, donde residió y trabajó hasta que, recientemente, estableció su residencia en el contiguo estado de Nueva Inglaterra, Connecticut. Trabajó únicamente en madera desde 1922 hasta que, en 1933, se interesó por el grabado en cobre. Desde entonces ha alternado los dos procedimientos, ganando igual reconocimiento en ambos."

293 Reproduced in Samuel Chamberlain's *Fair Is Our Land* (New York: Hastings House, 1942).

297 Reproduced in *The Sunday Star*, Washington, D. C., April 13, 1941, accompanying a review of an exhibition of miniature prints by members of the Chicago Society of Etchers. The exhibit was held in the National Museum under the auspices of the Division of Graphic Arts. Reproduced in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V: 3, 1946. As an original page of design, *Summer Evening* was inserted in the album presented to Walter Damrosch upon his retirement from the National Academy.

300 Reproduced in *Holman's Portfolio*, Holman's Print Shop, Inc., 5A Park Street, Boston, Mass., No. 1, announcing the print for sale at five dollars: ". . . the price is so low that the edition of 250 will not last long."

305 Reproduced by the American Artists Group as one of its Christmas cards.

310 Reproduced on the cover of a Princeton Print Club invitation to become one of its founding members, 1941–1942, signed by Elmer Adler, Francis A. Comstock and Lawrence Thompson; later, reproduced on the cover of *Princeton Print Club*, an Undergraduate Activity (Princeton, New Jersey, 1947).

313 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, May, 1942, and in *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 1946.

315 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, May, 1942.

323 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, January, 1942.

326 Reproduced in *The Month at Goodspeed's*, May, 1942, and in *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 13, 1942.

329 Reproduced by the American Artists Group as one of its Christmas cards.

334 An illustration in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V: 2, 1946.

335 Reproduced in Watson and Kent's *The Relief Print* (1945).

336 Purchase Prize, Library of Congress, 1943. Reproduced in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V: 2, 1946, and in *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 21, 1946.

355 Reproduced in various Harvard publications, including *The Official Register of Harvard University*, Vol. I, No. 23, September 30, 1953.

356 Still reproduced with the column "The College Pump," in *Harvard Magazine*.

366 Winner of a First Purchase Prize in the Third Annual National Exhibition of Prints, Library of Congress, 1945. Reproduced in The Woodcut Society announcement, *Presentation Prints for 1945*; in *The Washington Post*, May 13, 1945; in *The Carnegie Magazine*, December, 1945, as an illustration for the article, "Current American Prints"; in the *Boston Sunday Post*, May 5, 1946; and in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V:2, 1946.

367 Reproduced in Watson and Kent's *The Relief Print* (1945); in *The Sunday Star*, Washington, D. C., August 5, 1945; in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V:3, 1946; and in *The New York Times*, January 18, 1953, with the legend "A place projected by a temperament" and credits to the artist and Grand Central Art Galleries.

369 First reproduced in a Harvard Fund Council pamphlet, 1944, and later in various other Harvard publications.

377 Reproduced in the magazine *Tuftonian*, V:3, 1946.

379 Awarded the John Taylor Arms prize for best technical execution, the Thirtieth Annual Exhibition of the American Society of Etchers, held at the National Academy, 1945. Also awarded first prize at the Albany Print Club Exhibition, 1945. Reproduced in *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 13, 1945.

390 Illustrated in *Print Survey: A Review of Recent Fine Prints*, Autumn, 1946.

393 During the 1954 exhibition of contemporary American prints at the Bezalel National Museum, Jerusalem, chosen as the best print. The central portion of

the print was reproduced in 1970 on a Christmas card of the Minnesota Environmental Control Citizens Association.

424 Reproduced in *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 13, 1948.

432 First Purchase Prize at the Twenty-fifth Annual Exhibition of Etchings, The Print Club of Philadelphia, 1951.

433 Reproduced in *Today and Tomorrow*, leaflet of the Harvard Fund Council, September, 1949.

434 Reproduced in the magazine *Over the Bridge*, London, June, 1954.

446 Awarded the American Artists Group Prize for work on copper at the exhibition of the Society of Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers and Woodcutters (formerly the Society of American Etchers), at Kennedy & Co., New York, 1949. Reproduced as one of the American Artists Group Christmas cards, 1950.

463 Reproduced on a card sent by the Harvard Fund Council, Wadsworth, Cambridge, Massachusetts, with greetings for the Christmas season, 1949, and reproduced in various Harvard University publications, including *Programs on China, Soviet Russia, International Affairs*, October, 1950.

466 Reproduced as an American Artists Group Christmas card.

487 Awarded the John Taylor Arms Prize at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers and Woodcutters, 1951. Reproduced in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1950.

488 Reproduced in *The Annual Report of the Town of Lyme*, 1968.

498 Reproduced on the cover, *Town of Lyme Annual Report*, 1952.

504 Reproduced as part of the masthead of *The Columbia Heritage*, a printed mailer of history and current developments, beginning in 1954. The issue of May, 1954, includes reproductions of Nos. 511 and 512.

520 Reproduced on the poster announcing the exhibition of contemporary American prints held in Rome in 1954.

528, 530 and 531 Reproduced as post cards by Plimoth Plantation. Nos. 528 and 531 were reproduced in an article in the *Old Colony Memorial*, Plymouth, Massachusetts, August 18, 1955.

534 Reproduced by the American Artists Group as one of their Christmas cards. Also reproduced in the *Waterbury Sunday Republican*, May 8, 1966.

541 Reproduced in reduced size in 1958 on a meeting notice of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts. See *Notes on Printing and Publishing*.

549 and 562 Reproduced in the *Herald Tribune Book Review Children's Section*, November 1, 1959, as part of a review of *You Come Too* by Robert Frost, with wood engravings by Thomas W. Nason (New York: Henry Holt and Company).

570 Reproduced on the cover of *The Sturbridge Story*. Also reproduced in *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 22, 1961.

571 Reproduced on the cover of *The New England Galaxy*, Winter, 1960.

573 Reproduced on the cover of *The Sturbridge Story*, 1960.

592 Reproduced in the folder, *The Signet Society Present and Future*.

Feeding the Chickens, pencil drawing, $7\frac{1}{16} \times 11\frac{1}{8}$. See No. 379, p. 150.

Country Road, drawing with pen, pencil and grey wash, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 12$.
The print of the same title (No. 367, p. 147) follows
the same theme in a different scene, as does No. 362, p. 144.

THE ENGRAVINGS OF THOMAS W. NASON

BY JOHN TAYLOR ARMS

"His execution is of that highest order which has no independent essence, but lingers and hesitates with the thought, and is lost and found in a bewilderment of intricate beauty."

SO SAID the etcher poet, Samuel Palmer, about the work of that other great etcher poet, Claude Gellée. It is, I think, the most beautiful and touching thing I ever heard of one artist saying about another. Everyone who draws knows what he meant – the expression that does not obtrude itself upon the observer's attention, but holds back – subtle, almost shy, yet wholly eloquent; that seems to search and feel for its forms as it "lingers and hesitates" with the creator's thought; now revealing, now withholding; penetrating into the mystery of beauty, sounding its depths and, almost bewildered, offering the poet's interpretation of what he finds there. We sense it again and again throughout all art, this searching quality both of execution and conception. Sometimes the expression is positive and emphatic, sometimes almost tentative, but never blatant; yet always behind it lies the effort to reach into another and more beautiful world and to translate for us, in terms we may understand, the secrets that lie hidden there. It is in Claude's etchings, in Rembrandt's, in Ruysdael's, in Daubigny's, in Millet's, and preeminently in Meryon's; it is in Palmer's and Forain's, and in the etchings of McBey, Cameron and Griggs; and it is in the work of many other masters in this and other media. Call it the spiritual, the romantic, the subjective – call it what you will, there it is, to be felt rather than seen, intangible yet wonderfully potent.

This quality abides, it is my earnest belief, in the work of the American engraver, Thomas W. Nason, and I would long ago have said about that work what Palmer said about Claude's, had I known how to say anything so fine.

Nason is only forty-eight years old and his oeuvre to date numbers less than one hundred blocks and plates, yet on these rests a well deserved reputation. He is one of those men who seem almost to have been born with the tools of their craft in their hands, so perfect is the harmony between his temperament and his medium. A New Englander to the core, loving the woods and fields, the seasons, the skies, the moods and the life of his native countryside with a deep and abiding fervor, he possesses in full measure the reserve, inflexibility, and purpose of his race, tempered by a kindliness and broad humanity that make for tolerance; and by a romantic, pastoral strain that runs like a golden thread through the restrained, almost austere fabric of his art, imparting to it warmth, and intimacy, and deep poetic feeling. Incidentally, he has a delicious sense of humor which, if it is not obvious in his prints, helps to deepen their human quality. He appears to have turned quite naturally to the burin as the instrument best suited to his temperament, and he has developed its use upon both wood and copper until it has become in his deft hand what every artist's language should be, an indefatigable and amenable servant, ready and able to obey his slightest dictate and fluently to express the nuances of his every mood, yet wisely adhering to its own particular functions and remaining within its own province – guided by his judgment as well as his emotions.

I shall begin by discussing Nason's work upon the wood, his first love, and come later to his copper plates, all of which fall within the last four years.

In 1922 Nason published his first print, the wood-engraving *New England Farm*. With few exceptions he has employed the white-line technique in which the artist thinks, not in terms of black lines left standing by cutting away the background, but of white lines obtained by the use of the graver, or burin, on a block of hard wood, preferably box, cut across the grain. The white-line cut is capable of much more delicate and subtle tonal effects and is a positive process; the black-line is more limited and is a negative one. Following the initial venture came a series of wood-engravings interspersed with two woodcuts, the *Birches* of 1922 and *The Cove* of 1924. In all, the cutting is clean and sure, the artist seeming to know exactly what he wants to say and saying it directly and forcefully. Nason appears, like Calvert, to have escaped the period of uncertainty and technical inadequacy which marks so many beginnings, or else he knew his failures when he saw them and wisely suppressed them. In any case, his work matured young and the technical average of his prints is so high as to impart a remarkable sense of unity and homogeneity to his published output as a whole. There is steady development, both of

the spirit and the means of expression, but it is gradual and logical and marked by no sudden and unexpected ups and downs.

From 1925 dates the wood-engraving *In New Hampshire*. The approach is still rather objective and we feel a delineation of the physical attributes of the scene rather than an interpretation of its spiritual meaning. Also the cutting is still uniformly vigorous, with only a suggestion – in the foliage of the near trees and the texture of the foreground hillside – of the exquisite delicacy and modelling to come. Yet the print is fine in design and nice in the balance of its lights, darks, and greys, and there is a distinct effort to convey the largeness of the scene and its atmospheric effect. *The House in Digby*, of the following year, is akin to it in vigor, sparkle, and the massing of large blacks against a grey background. The illumination is less diffused than in the earlier print, and the concentration of light and shadow on the shingled wall of the old house, with the gnarled branches of the great tree silhouetted against the latter, achieves a fine climax to which all other forms and values logically and pleasingly lead. Nason well knows how to render the spatial relations of receding planes, and here, as in all of his prints, we are troubled by no sense of flatness, but seem to be looking out through the opening cut in the mat, as through a window, to the scene that nature and the artist spread before us.

I have reason to believe that Nason, always his own most exacting and uncompromising critic, likes the little *Nova Scotian Landscape*. I do not blame him if he does, for it is a lovely thing, an extraordinary combination of strength and delicacy, eloquent in its interpretation by means of black lines on white paper, not only of form and color and texture but, more important still, of the mood of time and place. A tiny print, a scant two inches high by three and a half inches long, it possesses a largeness of aspect and a breadth and simplicity of handling lacking in many a picture ten times its size. In it I am conscious of the subjective attitude of the artist making itself increasingly evident (he is becoming more concerned with what he *feels*, treating the elements of his chosen subject rather as the symbols to be used in expressing that feeling than as objects for strict representation), and in the *Lyme Farm* of two years later this approach is even more emphatically manifested and Thomas Nason, engraver on wood, comes into his own as poet and artist as well as master technician. In all the range of Nason's work I come back to this print again and again with augmented respect and affection, for it seems to me most beautifully to typify the man and the creator. Less exquisitely refined in cutting than are some of the later blocks, less sumptuous in play of tonal values, it remains – intellectually, emotionally, and technically – one of the most wholly satisfying things that has ever left his hands. Artist, subject, and material, are perfectly attuned, and each plays to the others as one instrument of a symphony does to the rest. There is grandeur in the sweep of sky and landscape, a hushed sense of solitude made more poignant by the lonely buildings; there is air and space and the beat of nature's pulse, at peace and yet with a tinge of mystery and the ominous; there is a story here, the more telling because left untold. It is New England, seen through the sensitive eyes of a New England poet and magically interpreted by his imagery.

Of the same temper is *A Deserted Farm*. A bit of bare cowyard, three sheds, a tree, a silo, and a luminous sky, are the threads out of which he has spun his fabric, but what a lovely pattern he has made of them – simple yet rich, solitary yet full of the interpretation of the homely life of the soil. The silo dominates the composition; superbly drawn, stark in its elementary character, it is as monumental as Canaletto's *Tower of Malghera* and as eloquent of its time as the great Italian's more picturesque monument. Here is poetry in a language homely but exquisitely refined, as again in *The Grey Barn* of the same year. We are all moved by the more profound manifestations of nature and by man's more dramatic creations: it takes the artist to see beauty in the plain things of life and convincingly to communicate the great verities of which they are the symbols.

In the following year Nason produced what I believe to be one of the most amazing technical accomplishments in any graphic medium of the present time. *Factory Village* is a wood-engraving carried to such a pitch of refined and delicate cutting as to suggest lithography or wash drawing were it not so wholly of wood. I once heard a knowing purist criticize this print because it exceeded forsooth, "the limitations of the medium." To me the only limitations in art are those of the artist's ability to express himself. No medium has ever yet, in the hands of any man, yielded its full capabilities, but in *Factory Village* Nason has proved, once and for all, his mastery of his métier. Few artists, especially of to-day when craftsmanship in its finest sense is unknown to most, have done as much. More than craftsmanship, however, is the spirit with which this print is impregnated and the senuous beauty of its pattern. The cold, stark, dreary corner of a deserted street in an American mill town; the tumbled buildings, unbeautiful in everything except the pictorial interplay of their surfaces and their meaning as symbols of the life they house; the chimneys piled against the drab sky; this is the stuff out of which Nason has told his story. And observe that, in order to do so, he did not have to use masses of black ink piled on the lithographic stone nor did he need to hack hunks of soft wood from the block, but rather caressed his material with the delicate point of his graver and with loving, tender strokes, in "a bewilderment of intricate beauty," sacrificed nothing of power, of mystery, and of emphasis.

After this comes an unbroken series of handsome blocks, partaking fully of all those qualities, both spiritual and technical, which are so essentially characteristic of the work of Thomas Nason. To select is well-nigh impossible, yet I would single out the two-block chiaroscuro *Leaning Silo* for its spaciousness and sense of rural peace; the *Upland Pastures* done for The Woodcut Society, for its sunniness and textural sparkle; the *Summer Clouds* for its interpretation of a warm, lazy day, with drifting, high-piled sky and luscious foliage; the *Tranquillity* for its monumental simplicity wrought of perfectly coördinated detail, its magnificent sky, and the essence of that quality which gives this lovely print its name; the jewel-like three-block chiaroscuro *Landscape with Sheep*; the bleakness and austerity of the little *East Wind* – multum in parvo; the extraordinarily

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effective combination of color and clarity, of elegance and power, of multiplicity and simplicity, in *Edge of the Pasture* (reminiscent to me, in grace and charm, of Maxime Lalanne's *Environs de Paris*); and the sheer exquisiteness of that miniature masterpiece – I use the word advisedly – the three-block chiaroscuro *Connecticut Pastoral*. I wish I could dwell on these prints, for I know and love them all and believe them to be important and lasting contributions to the graphic art of our time, but limitations of space forbid. Suffice it that each possesses the elements that go to make a work of art, and that they most eloquently testify to the ripening, deepening powers of the man who conceived and executed them.

When Nason turned to the copper in 1933, he was master of his burin, and the new material seems to have presented no difficulties to him. I remember with what eagerness I awaited his first line-engraving, for one day in my studio he had picked up a copper plate and I had urged him to take it home and work upon it, so sure was I that he possessed those rare qualities essential to the true line-engraver. That belief has since been more than justified. His first recorded plate is *Head of a Child*, which I have never seen, and this was followed by *Hartwell Farm*, *Finnegan's Hovel*, *Willow Stump*, and *Cummington Bridge*. The last three of these are before me as I write and I cannot but wonder at their beauty as first works in a new medium, even though their author was already a mature artist, an accomplished designer, and a skilled technican. There is something peculiarly dignified and fine about line-engraving – its purity, clarity, austerity, the uncompromising simplicity and vigor of the individual line. And already here in *Finnegan's Hovel* is evident an attribute which seems to me absent in so many engravings of to-day, yet which is present in all the great work of the past – a warmth of richness which is associated rather more with etching. Yet Dürer, the master line-engraver of all time, had it preëminently, and so did Schongauer and Lucas van Leyden and Marcantonio Raimondi. Nason said to me one day "I never accepted the conventional idea that engraved plates should be wiped perfectly dry and clean in printing. I treat mine exactly as you do your etched ones, printing them warm, with retroussage, if I feel the need of it, and frequently leaving ink tones to support the line work and enhance the atmospheric effect." This is, however, not the only reason why Nason's engravings are warm – I think the subtle sympathy existing between mind and eye and hand and burin has much to do with it. When a man is perfectly attuned to his subject and his medium, his work rarely lacks color.

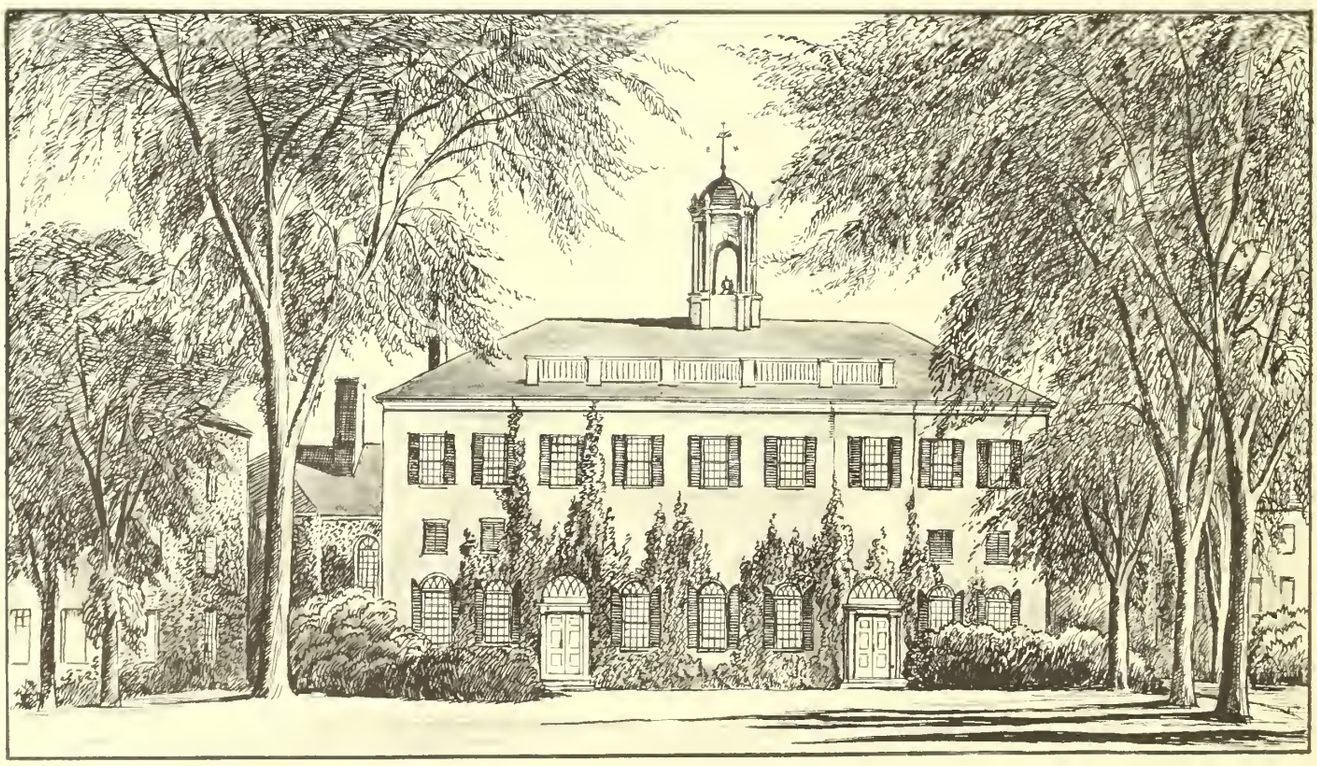
Nason seems to have attained mastery of the copper at a bound, and the quality of the earlier plates is as fine as that of the later ones. Take the *Woodcock* of this first year (a second state appeared in 1934) as an example. In his quiet way the artist once said, "I always thought this a good piece of work." To my mind it is an extraordinarily beautiful one, whether one considers the simplicity of the blonde first state or the rich pattern and color of the second, with its added modelling and foliage background (note in the latter how the artist has increased the sense of depth by the wise use of a film of ink left over the upper part of the subject.) I am very sure that Bracquemond would have liked the fine drawing, textural suggestion, and linear grace and purity of this plate – and I can imagine no more exacting a critic.

To this period also belong the exquisite *Vermont Landscape* and *Early Snow*. I remember coming into the gallery of The National Arts Club in New York where an impression of the former plate hung in the annual exhibition of The Society of American Etchers. The late Burton Emmett, a great lover and student of prints, had been there for an hour and, upon seeing me, came up and said, "I must have an impression of *Vermont Landscape* by an artist named Nason. It is one of the most beautiful things I have seen for a long time. Please tell me about him." One has to examine the line in this print to realize it is burin work, so warm and

rich is it. Nason has "dragged up" the foreground and enveloped it in tonal mystery beyond which the light creeps into the middle distance and up the sides of the far, rolling hills. Beyond all is a magisterial sky. Samuel Palmer would have approved of this plate, for it is imbued with poetry and sentiment, yet without a trace of "pettiness." In marked contrast to its rich luminosity is the cold, sharp clarity of the tiny *Early Snow*. Here is the essence of New England, seen through a poet's eyes and engraved by a hand in complete control of its instrument. When I look at prints such as these I feel that we may well be proud of an interpreter of our countryside so sensitive to its subtlest meaning, so sincere in his reaction, so skilled in his expression.

The year 1935 was a fruitful one for Nason, for during it he engraved five blocks and seven plates. Among the latter I have beside me proofs of that gem, *The Little Valley*, so delicate, crisp, and sunny; the *Connecticut Hills*, with its long, sweeping, horizontal lines of cloud and undulating country, its lonely barn and single, sentinel tree, its sparkling note of quiet lake; the lovely *Farm Lane* with, to me, a feeling akin to that of the Dutch masters in its haystack, shed, and drooping, protecting trees; the *Spring Landscape*, as clear and pure as the note of a flute, breathing the essence of early spring in some remote New England hamlet; and the second state of *Hartwell Farm*, another northern idyll. All these partake of those qualities of deep feeling, honesty of approach, and superb craftsmanship, which are so much a part of Nason's art. A retrospective exhibition of his engraved work hangs, at this date of writing, in the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York City. Seventy-five prints fill one of the galleries, among them the very beautiful line- and wood-engravings, *Across the Meadow* and *On the Island*, just published. As one enters the room one is impressed by a sense of large things, yet these prints are all small, some very small. It does not take a lot of copper and wood to engrave a big plate or block, and the monumental quality of Nason's work depends on largeness of conception, power of design, breadth of treatment, mastery of light and shade, and sensitivity of line. There is a widespread tendency to-day to belittle craftsmanship and to lay great stress on "vitality," "power," and that much abused word "feeling." These latter qualities are of supreme importance in a work of art, and are to be found in the prints of every master from Dürer to Bone; but it is well to recognize them in their true sense and not to confuse them with what is merely coarse drawing, drab subject matter, and an unnecessary amount of black printer's ink. Moreover, we must recognize that every admittedly great print is conceived of emotional and intellectual power and born in terms of beautiful and sensitive expression – that it is no coincidence that the masters have been craftsmen. They loved their craft, they explored and availed themselves of its every resource, and they spoke in words as intrinsically beautiful as the thoughts those words conveyed. To their great tradition, yet wholly of his day and generation, belongs Thomas W. Nason. The ability to feel deeply and poignantly is his; humility in the face of that feeling – perhaps the most precious gift of all – is his also; uncompromising honesty and unswerving allegiance to his own high standards belong to him; the willingness to count time and labor as nothing in his search for knowledge and skill; the will to be rather than the willingness merely to seem to be. The true artist is rare, and rare it is to be master of your craft. I believe Nason to be both.

Reprinted from *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, April, 1937.



Pearson Hall, pen and wash drawing, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 10$. See No. 382, p. 151.

COMMENTARY

BY CHARLES D. CHILDS, DOROTHY ADLOW, NORMAN DODGE, CARL ZIGROSSER, STEPHEN LEE RENWICK, ARTHUR HEINTZELMAN, AND OTHERS, WITH A POSTSCRIPT FROM THE LETTERS OF DAVID McCORD AND THOMAS NASON

FROM the considerable literature in newspapers, magazines and books on Nason's printmaking, a sampling has been culled to provide additional information and points of view. There are many newspaper reviews of his exhibitions, and the present selection can at least symbolize this body of comment. Between 1933 and 1961, *The Christian Science Monitor* alone published twenty-two articles, most of them on specific prints by Nason, some on exhibitions; almost all are the carefully considered observations of Dorothy Adlow. There are articles in many other newspapers, a number of them in the Washington, D. C. *Sunday Star*. Walter Muir Whitehill in his essay in this volume quotes from a *Sunday Star* article of January 8, 1938; another tribute to the artist was published by the newspaper in its issue of March 31, 1940. Royal Cortissoz in the *New York Herald Tribune* of Sunday, March 12, 1939, commented that in both engravings and woodcuts Nason

> recalls, through his simplicity and through his feeling for landscape sentiment, the lovely pastorals of Samuel Palmer. I wonder also if he has not felt the influence of Rembrandt. He remains, nevertheless, an independent personality.... In the long run Mr. Nason's engravings take precedence over his woodcuts, but in both categories he has something to say, and says it with good craftsmanship.

Not in the usual pattern of the newspaper articles is Frederick W. Coburn's in the Lowell, Massachusetts, *Sunday Telegram*, May 12, 1946, which contains several informative paragraphs on the careers of the Rev. William Walton Nason and the Rev. Elias Nason, the artist's father and grandfather.

The earliest of the magazine articles is "Wood Engraving and the Work of Thomas Nason," in *The Print Connoisseur* for January 1926. It is unsigned, but is probably the work of Nason's friend and fellow artist, Percy Grassby. Most of the article is devoted to general remarks on printmaking, but Grassby also praises Nason for "thinking with the Burin point uppermost," for "reserving the innovation of line treatment for the extemporaneous incision of the graver," for "refinement of thought" and "robustness of execution." He closes with the observation that Nason's engraving on wood "in common with the mezzotint, exemplifies that intrinsic quality brought about by working from a solid dark ground to light, and, having stopped at the right moment, a resultant luminous quality pervades the whole."

To the print connoisseur Louis Holman, head of the Print Department of Goodspeed's Book Shop in Boston, Nason's work in 1926 was not only new but radical. Increasingly, Holman was to become an admirer of Nason's printmaking; in 1926, however, in the section "Wood Engraving" in his *The Graphic Processes*, published by Goodspeed's, he was cautious about committing himself. He wrote of Bewick, mentioned the wood engravers of the 1860's who showed dazzling technique in reproducing line drawings on the block, and went on:

> The highest possible attainment of the white-line method, with its fine graver-work, done on the end of the grain, marvelously rendering local color, true values and textures, was reached in the Century School of Wood Engravers, of whom Timothy Cole is the conspicuous head. A later school, represented, let us say, by men like Lepère of yesterday and Nason of today, throwing convention to the winds, has developed a technique that has greater boldness than that of either Bewick or Cole, and a line system that knows no laws. Whether these and the school's other characteristics will make for strength or weakness, time alone will tell.

Also among the early critical comments was Elizabeth Whitmore's. In a printed announcement of an exhibition in January, 1930, of wood engravings by Nason and by Leo Meissner at The Print Corner, Hingham, Massachusetts, she declared:

> With Mr. Nason the change is not in subject, for he has always been most at home on lonely hillsides or in village street surprised when all humanity is indoors. Nor is it in technique for the smooth, yet tensely controlled line and flawless richness of texture in *Bare Trees* or the *Sugar Maple* have their prototype in the little *New England Farm-House* of 1925. Rather is it a new breadth and assurance shown in simpler masses, more sweeping line, steadier graduation of tone, so that the flawlessness, patient in *Nova Scotia Landscape*, has become confident and swift in the dramatic *Lyme Farm*.

Commentaries on Nason can be found in the prefaces issued with various of his prints commissioned by print

societies – The Woodcut Society, the Society of American Etchers, The Miniature Print Society, and others. His prints can also be seen in reproduction in the pages of *The Month at Goodspeed's*, now unfortunately no longer published. Between 1932 and 1942 *The Month* published reproductions, sometimes with commentary, on fifteen occasions.

If the selections which follow are evidence that Nason had many friends and many champions of his work, it is also true that none of them was more influential than John Taylor Arms. Increasingly, Arms is recognized not only for his own draftsmanship and printmaking, and his passion for medieval architecture, but also for his energy and eloquence as a spokesman for the continuing art of printmaking. He encouraged collecting and connoisseurship, and in a broader sense was a great educator and popularizer. He understood that artists must live and often cast himself in the role of interpreter, bringing printmakers together with the audience of all those who might buy their prints. He had a sure and deeply cultivated sense of the history of art, and among many attainments will be remembered as a historian. His writings in appreciation of Nason's work which are reprinted here reflect his unusual gift for expressing and encouraging appreciation of the work of many fellow artists.

Finally, there are the books in which Nason is discussed. Carl Zigrosser's excellent essay in *The Artist in America* (1942) is several times quoted in the present volume. The section on Nason in *The Relief Print*, edited by Ernest W. Watson and Norman Kent (1945), and the detailed listing of fifty-five of his prints in *American Prints in the Library of Congress: A Catalog of the Collection* (1970) are especially useful for reference.

The comments which follow do not always agree, and in a few assertions they may contradict each other. Each has something to add to an understanding of Nason's work. In seeking to bring together many views of Nason's printmaking, we have also sought to go to the source and to transmit the artist's own point of view as fully as possible. His own words will be found in abundance at the end of the collection of commentaries, as they are to be also found throughout this book.

S. H. H.

CHARLES D. CHILDS · 1932

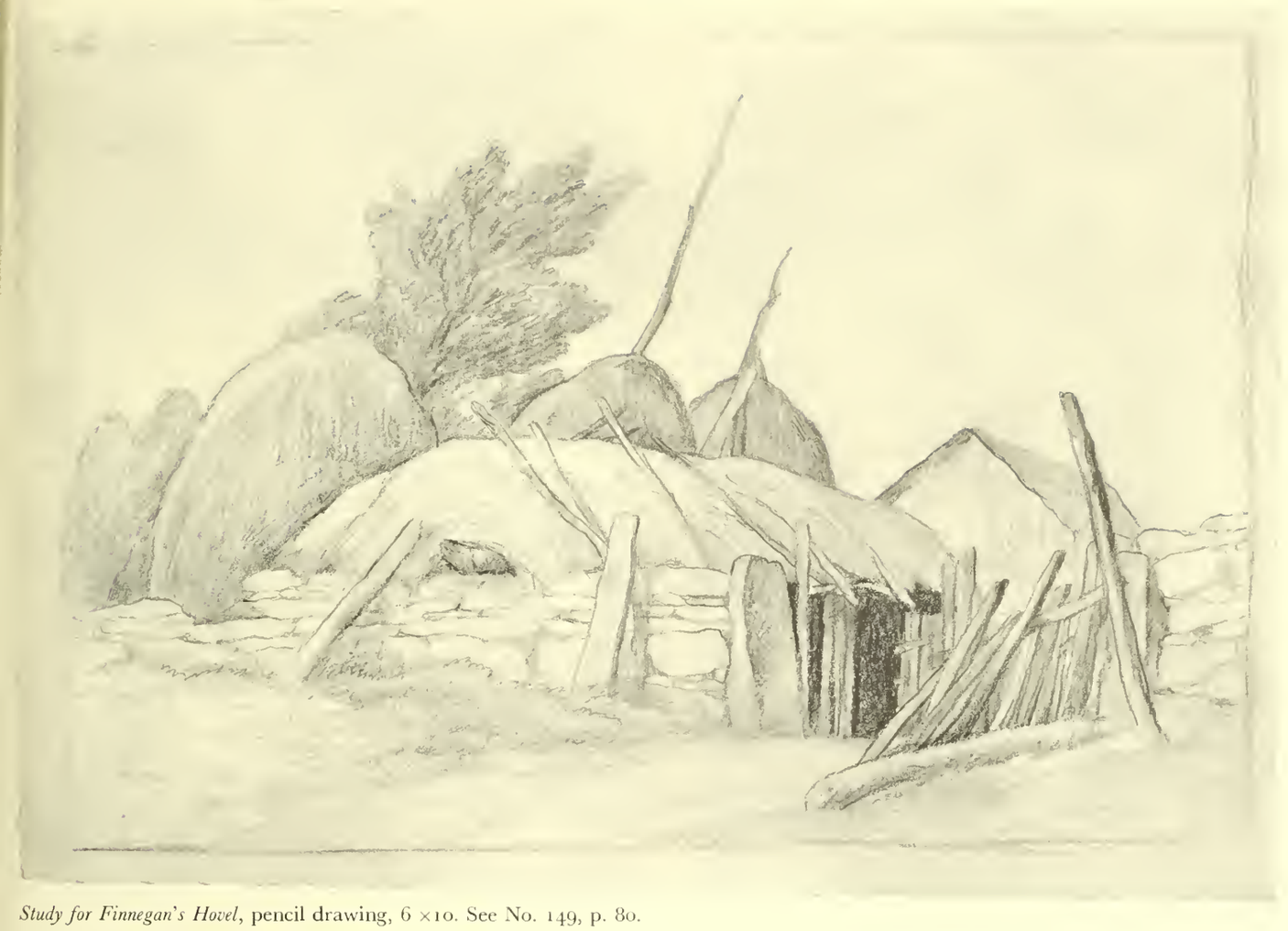
Nason's first experiments were with the tools and materials used to produce black-and-white prints. His idea, it may be assumed, was to reproduce his drawing on a wood block with all possible exactness and to aim at a pattern which should have definate form and proportion. In this he succeeded....

Constant practice and a better understanding of the effect he wished to achieve were responsible for a second period through which Nason passed. That crudeness which always accompanies the handling of unfamiliar tools had vanished and a more personal element began to appear. This was the beginning of style. It separated Nason from the mass and won him a place as an artist and an individual. In this period, however, refinement was still most evident in Nason's drawing, which became more adapted to the wood for which it was intended. The prints of this date are really more like woodcuts. They exhibit a well turned woodcut line, a straightforwardness of expression, and an advanced understanding of the problems which attend both engraving and printing from the block. Three examples leading up to this time may be mentioned as typical: *The Deserted House* is proved by analysis interesting more from the rather sombre effect of afterglow, which is telling and well-presented, than from the rather hesitant and awkward cutting. In *New England Farm* the appeal of a bold silhouette is used again, but the engraving is better and a new manner of rendering textures and the quality of materials is employed. It is an improvement. *Rockport* is one of the last subjects in which the woodcut manner predominates. It has many good points. Without becoming an obvious stylist Nason had developed a form of expression which is his own in many respects. The subject becomes more complicated, yet the engraving is confidently carried out. Practically all of the block is engraved, and the meaning of this is clear, especially to one who has attempted to cut on wood. Gone is the amateur's fear of difficulties too great for him to overcome. Gone, too, are the silhouette values of black and white, and in their place are full tone and half tone, modulated to suggest natural truths in colour, in atmospheric effects, and in structure. No convention which relies upon suggestion can do more. The progress in future prints becomes more gradual, but a most desirable and satisfying quality of further refinement is obvious to those who have seen and studied Nason's work from the beginning.

As his perception has become keener and his ideas more defined, Nason has improved his technical equipment to match. He does his own printing and is more than usually skillful in this important branch of a complex art. In almost every print shop some new result of successful experiment has been visible. Even in the first blocks Nason's devotion to each subject as he worked it out was thorough and intense. His desire to realize on paper the true likeness of the image in his mind has meant much discarding of blocks, finished and unfinished, which would have satisfied the sternest critic. Thus a large proportion of the published prints are based upon numerous drawings and engravings which could not quite meet the demands he made of them. The actual engraving does not appear laborious, and the freshness and unity of each design have become a matter of record in Nason's prints.

The wood engraving as Nason sees it is an intimate form of expression. Therefore all his prints have been small. Fine art is not measured with a yardstick, and often the engraver who practices restraint in size sees more largely than the one who attempts great things. Nason's art is not greedy. It does not ask to be all-revealing. Within its own scope are many beauties, and the fine gradual unfolding of these through his talent has benefited many others, not artists, who travel a quiet path to understanding.

Most of the scenes he has chosen are in New England and they frequently picture the last strongholds of a real



Study for Finnegan's Hovel, pencil drawing, 6 ×10. See No. 149, p. 80.

vanishing American. The native small farmer is slowly passing from the outlying country to the suburbs and the cities. His passing marks the end of a sturdy and independent class which has been hurried to its end by interbreeding and remoteness from community life. Its existence will be largely forgotten and its habitations will become part of the soil. But in the forlornness of all deserted things there is a certain poetry and a homely strength that Nason has seen and tried to preserve in his prints. . . .

From "Thomas W. Nason, Engraver on Wood,"
by Charles D. Childs, in *Prints*,
Vol. II, No. 3, March 1932

SUSAN A. HUTCHINSON · 1933

A lovely print is the copper engraving by Mr. T. W. Nason, *Finnegan's Hovel*, in which the line fairly sings. A thatched hut, into whose dark depths a doorway leads, three enormous haystacks at the rear, and incidentally a tree at the right and the gable of a barn at the left constitute the pictorial scene, but it is the line that is so fine. Mr. Nason is a block-printer and engraver, not an etcher, and "he has always been most at home on lonely hillside or in the village street surprised when all humanity is indoors." This is the first time that he has been represented in this volume.

From "American Prints of the Year,"
by Susan A. Hutchinson in *Fine Prints of the Year, An Annual Review of Contemporary Etching and Engraving*, edited by Malcolm Salaman (London and New York, 1933)

JOHN TAYLOR ARMS · 1934

Properly to evaluate the work of the present day wood-engravers one should glance back upon the development of this medium of expression. In the time of Dürer and Holbein it was customary for the artist to draw the design, which was then cut by a craftsman working under him. This has been a common procedure in the history of the art, followed also by Doré, though Blake, Calvert, and sometimes Bewick both drew and executed their masterpieces. In the nineteenth century illustration rose to a high point in England, the artists' designs on the wood being cut by such master craftsmen as the Dalziels, but the medium had ceased to be an original one and had become almost entirely reproductive. Highly finished drawings

penned and washed on the block were reproduced with amazing fidelity by some of the most technically accomplished engravers in the whole history of the art, but the intrinsic quality and beauty offered by the wood was largely ignored by the artist.

A new school has arisen to-day that numbers among its members men capable of conceiving beautifully and executing their conceptions with a skill equal to that of the best craftsmen of the last century. Moreover they utilize to the utmost the specialized character of the block and, by preserving the true feeling of wood in their designs and by making the material serve the ends of original rather than reproductive expression, they are restoring to its rightful place among the graphic arts this very beautiful and sensitive medium. Among the foremost of these stands the American, Thomas W. Nason.

Biographical data is of secondary importance; that Nason is both sensitive artist and expert technician is eloquently expressed by that most significant index to the man – his work. A thorough New Englander, there is a felicitous relation between the restraint, almost austerity, of his cutting and the mellowed sternness of his subjects. In his *Home on the Marshes*, with its low and threatening sky, we feel an utter loneliness and the desolate espanse of nature surrounding the little, rude house which is a veritable achievement in consideration of the smallness of the print. Contrast with this, in the larger *New Hampshire*, the sunny spaciousness of the distant patterned fields and the soft, rounded forms of the nearby trees with their convincing suggestion of rich, flickering foliage obtained by the minute white areas let into their dark masses. The little *Nova Scotia Landscape* displays boldly contrasting areas of black and white and is a telling instance of the brilliant clarity possible in wood-engraving, while *Factory Village*, to my mind the artist's masterpiece, is an outstanding example of the wide range and soft gradations of tones which it is capable of yielding. From the deepest black of the distant chimneys, through the tender grays of the nearby buildings to the dazzling pallor of the snow-covered roofs and branches, the eye travels easily and pleasantly, so cunningly disposed are these values and so perfect in their interrelation. There is a largeness and simplicity to this print, for all exquisite refinement of its craftsmanship, that proclaims it the work of an artist of rare sensibility and skill.

Nason is, to me, essentially a landscapist for, though he has engraved many purely architectural subjects, even in these there is an aura about the buildings suggesting the significance of their setting. This is very true in the splendid *Deserted Farm*, with its time-worn timbered buildings sagging to ruin. Here too is a silo, as monumental and characteristic a feature of our New England scene as the much painted and engraved windmill of foreign lands. Nason often avails himself of the majestic and beautiful roundness of this distinctively American structure, not alone for its charm of mass and curve, but very subtly as a landmark of a phase of our civilization – and never more aptly than here.

Upland Pastures is one of the artist's most personal and complete expressions. The luxuriousness and massed shade of foliage is here, the peace and grandeur of open spaces, and the sun-touched humanity of a distant farmhouse. Nason sees nature with beauty-seeking and beauty-finding eyes and, by his spiritual sensitiveness and great skill of hand in a difficult yet rewarding medium, he gives back to the world what he finds in it of loveliness, of dignity, and of repose.

From "The Woodcuts of Thomas W. Nason,"
by John Taylor Arms, the preface to *Upland Pastures*,
published by The Woodcut Society,
Kansas City, Missouri, 1934

ALINE KISTLER · 1935

In Boston, at *Goodspeed's*, the main December event is a showing of the most recent work and a selection of fine earlier prints by Thomas W. Nason, whose wood and line engravings have an arresting quality. The three splendid line engravings in the current American Etcher's *Annual* are thus given simultaneous Boston and New York exhibition. But, in Boston, the latest development of Nason's art is to be viewed in comparison with his earlier, better known, work in wood engraving. The clear precision of line is the same but the line engravings seem to give a fuller version of the chosen scene. In *Cummington Bridge*, for instance, the interplay of subtle light gradation is exquisitely expressed. The tree rhythms and the consequent shadow patterns are beautifully contrasted with the solid bridge form. Nason's mastery of both line and wood engraving is amazing but his imagination appears to have a freer rein on metal than in wood so we hail these new prints with enthusiasm.

From "Prints of the Moment: The Editor's Department"
by Aline Kistler, *Prints*, December 1935

DOROTHY ADLOW · 1936

The art of line engraving is a kindred medium of the craft of printing. Both originated in the same century, the fifteenth; and, although they possess certain technical features in common, they serve varying purposes. Before the era of the printing press and the block or plate, the same hand inscribed and embellished books. But the functions became specialized, and today we consider it a rarity when books are written and illustrated by one person.

In America one of the best craftsmen in the art of woodcuts and line engravings is Thomas W. Nason. He preserves the old tradition, working with finely modulated lines, achieving the ultimate depiction, not through a few summarizing audacious strokes of the graver, but by a painstaking conscientious workmanship. The results are invariably noteworthy for a quiet, thoughtful portrayal, for a discerning transliteration of surface textures, and for the achievement of the varying influences of light upon different heights and depths, directions and planes.

Hartwell Farm reveals Mr. Nason's splendid craftsmanship. The sagging, timbered house and barn, built upon the simplest horizontal and vertical lines, contrasts with

the large spreading tree in the foreground, growing so tall that it outgrows the picture, its sinuous boughs dipping down again into sight. Mr. Nason has emphasized the outlines of the tree and, by the emphatic indications of contour, heightened the feeling of a fluent continuous design.

It is interesting to observe the line itself, never straight and mechanical, always changing from thick to thin, sometimes crossing lines at right angles (hatched), sometimes intercepting others with a diagonal; sometimes it is a little dot, sometimes a frolicsome dab with a little hook at the tip. The greater the craftsman, the more effects and modulations lie in the path of his graver.

From "*Hartwell Farm* by Thomas W. Nason,"
by Dorothy Adlow, in *The Christian Science Monitor*,
January 8, 1936

Mr. Thomas W. Nason's prints are often referred to as wood cuts; but, in the technical sense, this is not accurate since Mr. Nason uses engraving tools and works on boxwood blocks. These blocks are imported from Turkey and are extremely hard; in fact, the most delicate lines do not break down under the pressure of printing.

There are only a few notable wood engravers in the United States and it is easy to understand why Mr. Nason is ranked among them. Wood engraving is a laborious process, one that requires patience as well as skill. Mr. Nason sometimes spends a month on one block and he confesses that he likes the cutting on the wood as much as the making of the original sketch. As a matter of fact, his compositions are so carefully planned that, often, he rearranges his first drawing on the block until the completed print bears little likeness to the original. Such was the case with *Ipswich Barns*. Although Mr. Nason made his first drawing of a barn in Ipswich, the print finally emerged with the addition of a silo which he had sketched in New Hampshire.

Actually, Mr. Nason is self-taught, for he has never studied engraving with any teacher. When he began his career, he had done little drawing and had no knowledge of engraving.

However, he had admired wood cuts and at the same time felt that the method used by most artists could be improved upon. As a result, he has evolved a highly original style which has won him wide acclaim. Among his most recent awards have been the popularity prize at the Kansas City Fourth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Wood Cuts, the John Arms Prize from the Society of American Etchers, for the best technical execution, and the money prize from the Wood Cut Society of Warsaw, Poland. Mr. Nason has also illustrated several books, including a volume by Robert Frost and one by Lionel Wiggam.

From "*Ipswich Barns*: From a
Wood Engraving by Thomas W. Nason,"
by Dorothy Adlow,
in *The Christian Science Monitor*,
August 17, 1936

· 1937 ·

Fifteen years of work by Thomas W. Nason, whose wood and line engravings have placed him among America's leading print makers, form a retrospective exhibition at the Grand Central Galleries during March. Starting with his earliest prints of 1922 and continuing down to the 1937 *On the Island*, the selection of 75 exhibits includes examples chosen for various editions of "Fifty Prints of the Year" and "Fine Prints of the Year." Many of the engravings that won prizes and honors for Nason are on view, as well as several prints which are no longer on the market.

With the exception of two or three portraits the exhibition is confined to Nason's rural views. His *Portrait of Edward Morrill*, which was included in the 1934 "Fine Prints of the Year," is a successful departure from his usual landscape motifs. Of this particular work Sarah Hutchinson wrote: "The head and strong features are well modelled, the gradations of tone employed furthering the effect. These tonal gradations have also excellent tacile values, for the hair, pipe and features are strongly differentiated. The line is controlled, even restrained, but adequate to the task of delineating type and character."

Nason first won recognition with his wood engravings, but in recent years he has turned to engraving on copperplate. That Nason has developed this medium to a high degree may be seen from his masterly craftsmanship and his ability to weave almost microscopic detail into intricate forms. In his later works the light effects are stronger with deeper and richer tonalities in the darks. Where a fusion of patterns marked his work before, Nason now tends towards the starkness of silhouetted buildings and trees against an illuminated sky.

The artist is attracted to the lonely hillside and old New England towns where life slowly and peacefully unwinds itself. He wanders to secluded meadows and upland pastures, recording a group of trees or a barn nestled in the hollows. Sometimes he seeks out an old blacksmith or a deserted mountain farm; and often material for his plates is found in sky effects such as *East Wind*, *Summer Clouds* and *November Twilight*. Nason also likes unfrequented country roads, old bridges spanning shallow streams and deserted village streets, where people live in quiet seclusion.

The Print Club of Albany this year selected Nason's *Road by the Sea* as the print to be presented to its members. In this print, a scene in Connecticut with a distant view of the sound, Nason has caught the atmosphere of the peace and quiet of early evening.

"Nason, Master Engraver, Has Retrospective,"
in *The Art Digest*, Vol. XI, No. 12, March 15, 1937

JEANNETTE LOWE · 1937

Wood engravings by Thomas W. Nason now on view at the Grand Central Galleries follow, among other, the theme of barns, silos, and old farm buildings, which adapt themselves admirably to the soft texture of this medium.

Of magnificent form and proportion, these monuments of an agricultural period remote from tractors and mechanical harvesters conform to the landscape in the best architectural tradition. Nason has lost no opportunity in his use of their form and material in his superbly organized designs. Among the line engravings *Hartwell Farm* which has appeared several times this winter in print exhibitions is shown again, and seems to gain through familiarity, so sensitively is it wrought in light and shade. *Louisburg Square*, an earlier print, conveys the complacency of Boston in its arrangement of fine old brick fronts, *Cummington Bridge* the unaffected charm of a covered wooden bridge.

"Thomas Nason," by Jeannette Lowe in
"New Exhibitions of the Week,"
The Art News, March, 1937

NORMAN DODGE · 1937

For over ten years we have been reproducing in *The Month* and exhibiting in our print rooms the wood and copper engravings of Thomas W. Nason. In between the printmaking Mr. Nason has occasionally done bookplates. Recently he has executed several commissions which have brought us to the conclusion that when an artist with the ability of Mr. Nason puts his hand to bookplates, it's time our customers should know about it. The other day we got Mr. Nason to express himself on bookplates. It wouldn't be cricket to expose him completely, but if you're thinking of a bookplate here are several ways of looking at it.

A bookplate is a mark devised to indicate ownership and in designing or selecting such a label two things must be considered: (1) the design itself, which may either be symbolic or pictorial, and (2) the medium best suited to express all the design says. A pictorial bookplate brings up the question as to whether a photographic reproduction of a scene or incident which demands the same amount of energy to engrave and print as an engraving suitable to hang on the wall be pasted in a book to identify ownership. In other words, is a miniature etching ever a fitting bookplate? This is a debatable question for any one interested in the selection and design of a bookplate. If you believe it is, you can stick to your guns with the reasonable assurance of one who will be in respectable company. A symbolical design clearly and simply fulfills its purpose – that of decorating a label. The execution of it is less complicated, first in the actual engraving and later in the printing, for an edition of such a plate can be handled by any good printer at a modest cost.

The two plates illustrated represent the mediums of wood and copper. In defence of wood we recall Gordon Craig's preface to his *Nothing, or the Bookplate*: "For my own part, I prefer a woodcut above every other process; for then the plate will be like the rest of the book, wood block and type being twin brothers. . . . " And in defence of copper we have only to examine the beautifully executed plate for Margaret Warren Nason. But the process is best left to the artist. Although it is impossible to establish standard prices for such work as the engraving and designing of a personal plate, $75 is the minimum for a design on wood, and $100 to $200 is the range for a design on copper. We shall be glad to talk it over with you in person or by mail.

"Bookplates on Wood and Copper" by Norman Dodge
in *The Month at Goodspeed's*,
Vol. IX, No. 3, November 1937

JOHN TAYLOR ARMS · 1937

The qualities peculiar to the masters of the burin are rare in the work of contemporary artists. The tempo of twentieth century life is so fast, the pressure upon it so great, that there has until recently been little tendency on the part of graphic artists to devote themselves to an instrument so essentially formal and restrained in its expression. The art of the true line-engraver is basically stable, full, explicit, and, at the same time, reserved, as compared to the freer, more spontaneous statement associated with etching. In view of this, it is significant to note the growth of interest in the medium, both here and abroad. Nason came to it fully equipped, both spiritually and technically, and his rise has been so rapid that to-day he stands among its acknowledged living masters. Still a young man, he has a distinguished oeuvre behind him and, endowed with breadth of view, studiousness, sensbilities, capacity for hard work, and great technical skill, he can look forward with assurance to a rich and abundant future accomplishment.

Referring to *Approach of Spring*, Nason said to me, "The idea was to suggest the feeling at that time in early spring before the wintry aspect has gone and when the sap has just begun to rise." I think that he has, in this lovely print, most successfully caught that mood of time and place which he wished to interpret. We have all seen and felt it, and we have here a lasting and charming reminder of one of nature's most subtle and fleeting aspects. . . .

From John Taylor Arms' preface to the engraving
Approach of Spring, published by The Society
of American Etchers, Inc., 1937

CARL ZIGROSSER · 1942

It is curious about wood-engravers: there is one thing they all seem to have in common, a kind of quiet dignity and rectitude that pervades their life and work; probity perhaps is the word. It may have something to do with the medium in which they work, the discipline involved in so exacting an art, the necessity for planning and foresight in a method wherein a mistake is always fatal. Perhaps it derives from the nature of the medium itself, so unobtrusive, precise, and uncompromising that for its appreciation one must meet it more than half way. Method and rightness inhere in the work of all true wood-engravers, and somehow these virtues are to be discovered in their characters also. In real life they are the most estimable of

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men. Quiet and industrious, sober and responsible, they let their work speak for them. Timothy Cole was such a character and so are Ruzicka, Landacre, Cook, Lynd Ward, and Allen Lewis, however much their work may differ, one's from the other's. And the characterization fits Thomas W. Nason like a glove....

His earliest productions were somewhat in the woodcut tradition of Lankes (*New England Farm* of 1922), a suggestion of mood in broad, contrasting strokes. But he soon began to refine upon his technique, vary his cutting with finer lines and stippling, introduce a great range of semitints into his composition. Such blocks as *Blacksmith Shop* and *House in Digby* are representative of the transition, which is also dramatized in the difference between the first and second states of *In New Hampshire*. The new manner, full-fledged, appears in the *Lyme Farm* of 1929, the *Ipswich Barns* of 1930, and all the works from 1931 on. He is now master of a technique as flexible and accomplished as that of the British school. In these prints and in others of the same period, such as the powerful *On the Maine Coast*, *Farm Buildings*, *Back Country*, and *Deserted Farm*, he makes use of the silhouette in his compositional scheme; that is to say, he projects his elements against a clear white sky. In 1932 his engravings begin to show a greater preoccupation with atmospheric effects, more elaborately worked out, ranging in mood from *Summer Clouds* to *November Twilight*. In some of these (*The Leaning Silo*, *November Twilight*, *Tranquility*, *Landscape with Sheep*) he has made use of an additional block or two for chiaroscuro effect....

Much of the year 1934 was devoted to a new field of activity, engraving on copper. In turning to the old but nowadays seldom practiced art of copper-engraving he no doubt was actuated by a desire to widen the range of his expression. An entirely new scale of values and textures are possible by an intaglio emphasis. But the change also had the effect of giving him a wider audience and the entrée to the exhibition opportunities of the etching societies. His approach to the copper was tonal rather than linear; through his facility over the graver, he burst, full-fledged as it were, into the print world with such excellent plates as *Woodcock*, *Early Snow*, and *Vermont Landscape*, and the *Hartwell Farm*, *Little Valley*, and *Farm Lane* of the succeeding year. *Mountain Farm* and *Hebron Barns* are notable among the more recent engravings. The sphere of his subject matter has gradually been expanding from Massachusetts to Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut and more recently to Maine and Bucks County, Pennsylvania: *On the Island*, *Abandoned House*, *Trees along the Delaware*, *Boats Penobscot Bay*, and *Summer Storm*.

His subject matter is almost entirely rural, with an occasional glimpse of a country village. His only venture into the urban scene was the *Louisburg Square* of 1930. Of this famous Boston landmark he wrote in a letter: "I am influenced too much, in doing a subject like this, by what is before my eyes and by association, etc., and the result is not what I would like in all respects, though I feel I was successful in getting in something of the dignity and solidity of the Square." There is a suggestion, in the constraint he voiced above, that he feels more free as an imaginative composer than as a realistic interpreter. He is a poet rather than a reporter. He creates visual idylls and threnodies. He surveys New England as an elegiac and pastoral poet. He finds a somber note in the countryside, its loneliness and dilapidation: *New England Scene*, *Back Country*, *The Leaning Silo*, *Deserted Farm*. But also the serene melody of still waters and green pastures: *End of Day*, *Tranquility*, *Landscape with Sheep*, *Pennsylvania Landscape*. His pulse is tuned to country matters. He was brought up in a rural environment, and although for some years he lived near Boston, he has gone back to the country again. He has built himself a house in Joshuatown, Connecticut. There he lives with modest dignity and a kind of antique stoic virtue....

From "Thomas W. Nason" in
Carl Zigrosser's *The Artist in America:*
Twenty-four Close-ups of Contemporary Printmakers
(Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1942)

STEPHEN LEE RENWICK · 1942

...Strangely enough there are few poets among New England's artists. Thomas W. Nason is chief among them. He employs the quiet language of engraving. On the end grain of a boxwood or maple block – never larger than 7 x 12, generally much smaller – he succeeds in translating with microscopic lines and dots what he feels about the fields, the farms, and the enfolding hills. Sometimes he gives us a broad sweep of horizon and acres of meadow land on 35 square inches of wood; sometimes only a winding road and a sagging barn. Always he gives us more than meets the objective eye. Invariably he gives us mood. Whatever the subject, the presence of man is deeply felt though he seldom appears outside the walls of his house or barnyard.

...How simple the principle and process of his art. Yet how magic the power to capture and crystalize so much of beauty and life itself on a little block of wood. It is miraculous because no one can tell you how it is done. You can compare a Nason print with one by a lesser artist. The technique may be equally good in each. So may all the picture qualities you can *talk* about. Yet one has depth, profundity; the other lacks provocative quality....

Nason does a lot of sketching with pencil and ink, using gray watercolor washes. These are seldom for direct use in his engravings. They might be called his "interviews"

with nature. Perhaps "conversations" is a better term, for that connotes intimacy rather than objective observation.

Nason never makes "studies" for his engravings. A sketch as fragmentary as that which preceded *Pennsylvania Landscape* (reproduced) is most likely – in his opinion – to lead to a better engraving than a study which attempts to anticipate effects which are better left to direct treatment of the burin with which he prefers to do his thinking.

From "Thomas W. Nason, Poet-Engraver of New England," by Stephen Lee Renwick, in *American Artist*, November 1942

DOROTHY ADLOW · 1943

Thomas W. Nason published his first print in 1922. Since that time there have appeared at intervals additions to the series of his wood engravings that portray New England. There is a special quality of atmosphere, a distinctive calm in these little pictures in black and white. The artist observes the countryside, trees, barns, farmhouses, silos, old fences, and he translates the imagery into fine, nicely modulated lines. Everything is accomplished with extreme caution and there is no sharpness or violence. His pictures are strengthened by gentle assurance, and they have an enduring beauty for want of any spectacular features.

Mr. Nason employs the white line technique. The lines are cut across the grain with the graver or burin in a block of hard wood (generally boxwood). The engravings are notable for the gentle modulations from dark to light, light to dark. While lines and dots are the means of achieving textual differences, illumination, and atmosphere, the pictures appear more tonal than lineal in their ultimate realization.

From "*Goshen Hill Farm:* A Wood Engraving by Thomas W. Nason," by Dorothy Adlow, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 13, 1943

DOROTHY ADLOW · 1944

... His little black-and-whites are the product of patience, thought, and highly practical skill. He shows kinship with the old masters of wood-engraving. He dwells lovingly upon the pliant, yielding line. The strokes of his tool bear their responsibility with grace and modesty. They add up to beautiful textures, nicely modulated variations. They do more than establish similarities of surface appearance; they are enlivened with rhythmical sequences, enriched with gentle contrasts. These beautiful little prints have repose and reticence. *Shower in Landscape* is particularly impressive for subtle gradations in atmosphere. *The Hilltop* wrought on copperplate has a ringing clarity.

From a review by Dorothy Adlow, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 2, 1944, of exhibitions of prints by Thomas W. Nason, Ruth Haviland Sutton, and Stow Wengenroth, at Holman's Print Shop, 5a Park Street, Boston

CARL ZIGROSSER · 1945

In looking at Thomas W. Nason's new wood engraving, *Near Lyme, Sunset*, one is reminded of Joachim Sandrart's tribute to his friend and fellow artist, Claude Lorrain:

"He applied himself with great earnestness and industry to perfect himself in his art and learn the secrets of nature. Day after day he would spend in the Campagna, from sunrise till long after nightfall, noting the tints of the dawn and the splendor of the setting sun...."

It sums up both the artist's intention and his achievement, the unswerving direction of his interest. Nason is, one might say, a pastoral or elegiac poet. He has certain intuitions and emotions in the face of nature, certain feelings of beauty, ecstasy or brooding revery – and these he communicates to the beholder in his engraving.

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To call him a poet is not to say that his work has literary allusions or connotations. It is merely to stress the quality of his approach, the intense and exalted communion with nature which the poet and the artist share alike. As the poet works with words, with sound and rhythm, to achieve his aim, so the artist works within the conventions of his craft, in this instance with subtle gradations of luminous color, with linear rhythms in growth-forms and rolling hills. This engraving is, as it were, a sonnet in pictorial form.

Indeed, one may look at many a print of the past or present as a poem issued on a single broadsheet, and gain thereby in insight and understanding. The same intensity and unity of mood, the same appeal to timeless beauty are apparent in both. Prints and books are closely allied, and serve many aims, some of them didactic and utilitarian, but others intrinsic and aesthetic. Among those of intrinsic appeal, the tributes to nature and its many moods play a considerable part.

The unfolding of the idea of landscape in prints and paintings makes a fascinating study. In the beginning, landscape was merely the background for the human figure or religious drama. We see this in the works of Dürer, Mantegna, and their contemporaries. In the Sixteenth Century there were tentative beginnings in the prints of Altdorfer, Titian, and Brueghel; but it was not until the Seventeenth Century that the appreciation of pure landscape came into its own with such artists as

Claude, Rembrandt, van de Velde, Ruysdael and many others. Since then the tally has grown steadily in richness and variety. In this great tradition of the pure landscape print, Thomas W. Nason takes his place with charm and integrity.

From "*Near Lyme, Sunset*, a Wood Engraving by Thomas W. Nason," by Carl Zigrosser (The Woodcut Society, 1945)

DOROTHY ADLOW · 1945

At the Copley Society Galleries, 270 Dartmouth street, there will be on view through this week the work of three members of one family: Thomas W. Nason, engraver on wood and copper; Gertrude and Kathryn Nason, painters. Gertrude Nason lives in New York. Kathryn Nason is the wife of the composer, Walter Piston. She lives in Belmont. Thomas Nason is a resident of Lyme, Conn.

Each member of the Nason family operates independently. They all seem to enjoy the country, but the response of each is individual. Both sisters ply the brush, but it is not necessary to consult the catalogue to know which has painted the respective canvases. There is a marked difference in subject choice, in temperament, and in visualization.

Kathryn Nason seems happiest on a hill-top in Vermont recording with a swift brush her impression of the sprawling hills and open skies. She roughs out the masses and indicates the hollow spaces. The manner is summary and the effect airy and decorative.

Gertrude Nason prefers to be close to people and the domestic scene. She paints genre and still-life. She is observant, witty, and poetic. She paints the house-cat, the parlor-stove, a corner of the attic, a country dance, and a country-auction. She has an eye for revealing detail and a good sense of narrative. Sometimes her palette runs to vivid hues; sometimes it is adumbrated with soft tones of gold or silver.

Thomas W. Nason is one of the foremost engravers in our country. He was self-taught, evolving a technique on the wood-block and copperplate that is masterly. It is possible to study his accomplishments in both mediums in more than fifty prints exhibited at the Copley Society. When he works on the wood-block, he strives for design through effective disposition of masses in nicely modulated tones. On the copper-plate he operates in lineal pattern.

The subjects are chiefly rustic. They are represented in a poised and unspectacular manner. A farmhouse sits snugly on a road. A silo, a barn, a schoolhouse, a church may exact refinements of skill which the artist contributes unsparingly.

The sensitive treatment of detail is exceptional for a presentday temperament; it looks back rather to the golden age of wood engraving, and further back to characteristic Renaissance handiwork. Accustomed as we are today to the emboldened stroke, the swift and approximate attack, the Nason craftsmanship comes as a surprise, and an agreeable one. The wood engravings seem to be implicit in the wooden medium; the copper engravings are peculiarly metallic. Each medium has its specific attributes, and Mr. Nason has probed each respectively with rare discernment.

"Three Nasons in One Art Show," by DorothyA dlow, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 5, 1945

ARTHUR W. HEINTZELMAN · 1946

Thomas W. Nason is a true son of New England, which has been his inspiration throughout his entire work. We find subjects from Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, a few from Maine, and several prints from material found in Bucks County, Pennsylvania....

Although Nason's early productions were in the formal woodcut tradition, as he grew more familiar with his tools he soon began to refine his technique. We need only compare *New England Farm* (1922) with *Summer Clouds* (1934) to realize the tremendous step forward in accomplishment.

Thomas W. Nason today is unlike many engravers, for he seems to have no particular method of expressing his ideas. Everything he undertakes appears to be a new adventure. This may be due in great part to his being self-taught, hence not influenced by any one school of engraving, or to his method of attacking the block directly without a preliminary sketch. He will tell you that he used to paint as a hobby, but that he accomplished nothing much in that field. This is difficult to understand, for in studying his prints we find every indication of the broad painter-like values and freedom of handling which are the result of experience with the brush. In the art of engraving we find few artists who are entirely original in style and technique. This medium is usually formal and calculated, because of the limitations of the graver, which is quite different from the free movement of the needle in either etching or drypoint. The work of Nason is free from any sort of mannerism, and his art goes far beyond technique. We have only to study the unusual print of *The Factory Village* to see to what extent he can carry his technique on wood; so carefully executed are the relative values that the method seems to lose its identity. Sometimes his results are obtained with great simple depths of tone, or else the delicated portions are handled with the most sensitive touch.

Nason's work is of a very high standard throughout. One need cite only a few examples such as *Upland Pastures*, *Edge of the Pasture*, and *Landscape with Sheep* to discover that the foundation of his art lies in his keen analysis of and sensitive feeling for nature. The rolling landscape and wooded countryside provide him ceaseless opportunity to study the changing aspects and seasons of New England to the limit of his imagination. Subjects from the farm and rural scene give pleasure even without an understanding of the artist or his methods, for one has a complete sympathy with his aims, though the subtleties of the actual work may escape the uninitiated mind. The connoisseur knows that Nason has been his own severest critic; what he has produced can be understood and enjoyed by all. A few prints to be mentioned in this class are *Summer*

Clouds, *Near Lyme*, *Sunset*, *Country Road*, *Village Street*, *Tranquillity*, and *Lyme Farm*. These are so individual that they almost defy classification. Although some might call him a realist, his work has been accepted and approved by all schools. The term "realism" should be used in connection with Nason only in a broad sense. One could call him an impressionist inasmuch as he records fleeting and momentary effects, fascinating us with lurking mystery, dramatic blacks, and luminous clear light.

A number of Nason's later engravings, called chiaroscuro prints, have been executed by employing two blocks. The use of a tone block in engraving is quite different from that in a woodcut, for in Nason's work particularly there is just as much engraving on the tone or color block as there is on the black one. His color block is not just a flat tone as in woodcut, and gives something more than a decorative effect. The color is usually a brownish or neutral yellowish gray, which creates an impression of warmth and light. As in the superb *Pennsylvania Landscape*, the sky is usually the area where the tint is employed. Other notable examples of this method are *Upland Pastures*, *Summer Storm*, *Tranquillity*, *Landscape with Sheep*, *Edge of the Pasture*, *Connecticut Valley Farm*, *Haying in Vermont*, and *Connecticut Pastoral*. To obtain these splendid results by a combination of inks Nason evidently had a very clear idea of his subject before the blocks were engraved. The skies and clouds convey a surprising sense of lightness and movement.

So far, mention has been made only of Nason's wood engravings. Through the experience gained in engraving on the block, when he took up the copper plate in 1933 he was fully equipped to equal his other work without an interval of experimentation. This seems surprising, as wood engraving is a white line process, and the copper plate the direct contrary; here it is the engraved line that gives the impression as in etching or drypoint. That Nason attained mastery of the new medium is clear in *Woodcock*, *Vermont Landscape*, *Early Snow*, *Connecticut Hills*, *Across the Meadow*, *March Thaw*, *Winter Sunlight*, *The Silo*, and *Hebron Barns*. He is still in the full activity of his art. We look forward to even greater achievements, for the analytical expert finds a shaping force behind every stroke in Nason's work. His accomplishment is unique; no one has produced an *oeuvre* of greater distinction in American engraving than Thomas Nason.

From "Wood Engravings by Thomas W. Nason"
by Arthur Heintzelman, in *More Books, The Bulletin of The Boston Public Library*, May 1946

DOROTHY ADLOW · 1946

The Print Department of the Boston Public Library has on display for May a selection of wood engravings, wood cuts, and copper engravings by Thomas W. Nason.

This one of the most gratifying exhibitions in the long list of presentations in this gallery. Mr. Nason is a New Englander. He has cultivated his exceptional skills through patient translation of typical rustic views into engraved lines. The subjects are in themselves dear to us. But Mr. Nason has invested them with a modest nobility; he has probed his media with humble persistence. He has shown the strictness and tenacity of a true craftsman. He has never yielded to temptations of displayful utterance. There is not the least hint of the pressures of the marketplace in his prints; nor is there any symptom of short cuts in performance. He never relaxes into clichés or adopts tricks of dramatization. In Nason prints there remains evidence to corroborate the medium. The copper plate preserves the metallic pliance and luster in finely modulated lines, and the wood engraving maintains qualities of fiber and grain.

...If the prints are studied chronologically, the early ones appear conventional, and the subsequent plates reveal a growing breadth of outlook, and freedom in manipulation. There is a more authentic illusion of depth, a clearer articulation, a more sensitive differentiation of textures. The luminosity is more vivid, the line play more graceful and more complex. There is a greater command over tonal gradation....

From "Prints and Paintings on Exhibition,"
by Dorothy Adlow, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 6, 1946

· A POSTSCRIPT ·

FROM THE LETTERS OF DAVID McCORD AND THOMAS NASON

David McCord first wrote Thomas Nason on July 2, 1943, to introduce himself as an admirer and collector of Nason's work. The poet and the printmaker had met briefly at an exhibition of Nason's prints at the St. Botolph Club in Boston, years before. McCord went on to ask about the possibility of a commission, and in this way began a correspondence which lasted more than two decades and resulted in a score of commissioned prints. He explained:

> ...I expect to publish late in August a small broadside, on which I shall say something about Harvard and the wars which she has survived. I want very much to have a woodcut as a headpiece, and perhaps another smaller one as a tailpiece, for this broadside, and wonder if you would be interested and willing to undertake to cut the blocks for us? This broadside would be published under the aegis of the Harvard Fund Council, and of course we would pay for the execution of the blocks, though it seems to me that you should have the right to control any other prints that you might care to sell.
>
> Will you let me know whether or not you will consider doing this for me? I presume that you would want to make the drawing on the spot, but if photographs would do, I could supply you with a number. I am sure you are familiar enough with the Yard to know what the atmosphere is like. This would not in any sense be a war drawing, but largely a study in trees with a background of buildings.

By kind permission of David McCord, a few excerpts from the correspondence are printed here. The selections have been made chiefly for what they reveal of Nason's

way of working. Clearly, he enjoyed these commissions, and he accepted them even when the time between a request and the desired date of delivery was as limited as a month or five weeks. He was accommodating in matter of price, as well, and made adjustments depending on the ability of several different agencies or offices at Harvard to pay his standard charges (which themselves were never high). Usually, there was not time to plan a trip to Cambridge to make drawings, and he worked from photographs. His modest earnings from the commissions were augmented by an agreement that he could sell proofs from the blocks, and on occasion the Harvard *Alumni Bulletin*, at the suggestion of David McCord who for six years was its editor, provided free advertising. All in all, there is a strong element of Yankee barter and ingenuity, as well as obvious pleasure in friendship and shared projects, on both sides of the correspondence.

From Thomas Nason, July 30, 1943:

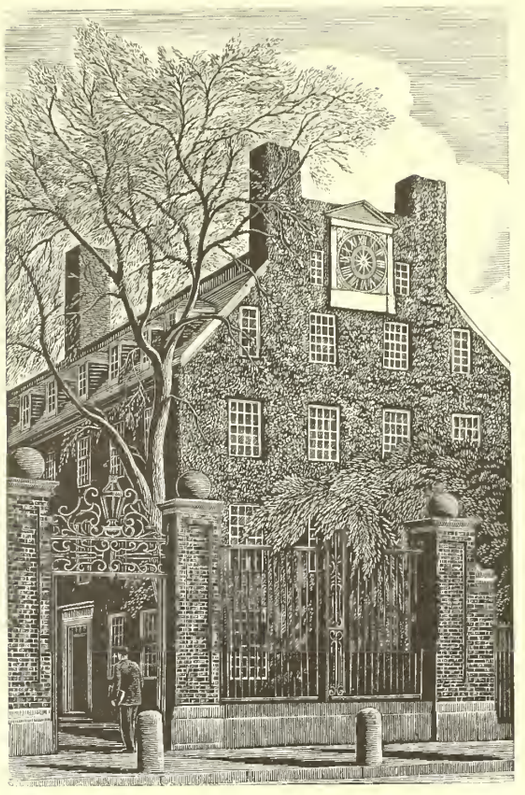
> The photographs arrived day before yesterday and although I have not yet had time to do more than look them over, I would say that probably Massachusetts Hall would be the best of the buildings to do, and the gate,—the view I think, from Harvard Square—would also be a good subject. From my point of view this would perhaps be the better of the two.
>
> But neither are any too distinct, owing to the play of light and shadow, particularly Massachusetts Hall. In this case it might be that a view of it when the leaves are off would make a better subject. Do you think you could find a photo taken at that time of year, without too much trouble?
>
> That is one reason the Memorial Church shows up so handsomely in the photograph.
>
> I am still expecting to go up to Boston in the near future and I might be able to get out to Cambridge and make a drawing—although I understand Harvard is an armed camp and I might need a special permit from Gen. Marshall himself to get near it.

From Thomas Nason, August 4, 1943:

> Thanks for the additional photographs, which came yesterday. These are what I had in mind, the two views of Massachusetts Hall being very fine. Either would work out all right, but I think I should prefer the one showing both front and side elevations, as making a stronger composition, even though it does present some fifty or more windows...
>
> The pump would make an interesting subject, but to do it I should have to try to imagine a different view of it, so it would make a better balanced thing, and the photo isn't quite distinct enough. I might try to work out a very small thing if you still want a tail piece. It would be good for this purpose, just the pump, no background....

From David McCord, August 18, 1943:

> ...The paper which I have marked No. 1 is some that was made for the Harvard Press twenty years ago by Bruce Rogers and bears his watermark. It is old, of course, and perhaps a little brittle; but since I am talking about antiquity, this may not be a disadvantage. The main thing, of course, is that whatever paper I use is satisfactory to you. If none of these sheets will do, just let me know. . . . All the paper enclosed is easily available. . . .



Massachusetts Hall. See No. 463, p. 168.

From Thomas Nason, August 20, 1943:

> I thought I had finished the woodcuts yesterday and so could get them off before the 20th, but as I was about to do so, I took another look at the one of Massachusetts Hall and of course saw something more to be done and this led me on until it was too late for the mail. However, I did improve it, and one day won't make too much of a difference I hope.
>
> To make a good composition I felt I should get the church in at the right. This didn't show in the large photograph but did show in another one, of a slightly different view. I hope I have gotten it placed about right in the landscape. It was difficult to figure just where it would come from this particular angle.
>
> Now, I am mailing the two blocks to you today and your printer can get them electrotyped (don't let them reproduce the *print*). Then the printing of your broadside can be done direct from the electro. I'll have to make you personally responsible for the original block. It won't hurt it to have it electrotyped, and after that is done if you will return it to me I shall appreciate it, as I have not printed anything but a few trial proofs, one of which I am enclosing....

From David McCord, August 21, 1943:

> The excitement of the first look at the proof of your engraving is still with me. It exceeded in performance even my optimistic hope, and I cannot thank you enough. I am sure that countless Harvard men will be utterly delighted too – if only the printer can fulfill his exacting task.... You have done us a great service and I am most grateful.

From Thomas Nason, August 23, 1943:

> It's a pleasure to know that you liked the wood engravings so much, and I only hope I didn't give the printer

something which he cannot handle with the limitations of the power press. They can always do a good enough job on slick paper. I was sorry I did not hold the blocks a day longer so that I could have proved them on the samples you sent. Of course, the Bruce Rogers sheets are the most interesting, but will probably be the hardest to print on. I noticed that, among the samples, the poorest result was on the Rogers paper and the best on the one marked "Blackstone 70." The next best seemed to be on the laid.

But perhaps if the printer will take the time to overlay carefully, give it plenty of punch and not too much ink, he can do it all right on the Bruce Rogers paper. They're almost all alike in not being willing to apply the pressure; they don't want any impression to show on the back. So they try to get solidity by using too much ink, with the inevitable result that the block fills up and comes out with a muddy effect. But possibly you can prevail upon them in this case. We can't expect it to look like a hand pulled proof.

In the Massachusetts Hall block the thing to look out for will be the upper part – not to get too heavy an effect among the branches of the trees. My proofs were hurriedly pulled, without any make-ready, and I don't know just what can be done with it, with more care in the printing....

From David McCord, August 30, 1943:

The broadside went to press tonight. Try as we could, the result with the Rogers sheet was not satisfactory and I did not dare use it, so I turned to the Blackstone – which is not interesting, as you say – but with it we managed to achieve a fair clarity. Here is an early proof of it, with the inking still a little too heavy. Compare it with the Rogers and you will see why I made the change. If the grain is wrong on these as they are folded, disregard the fact. It will be all right on the final product.

You will note some textual changes. I was able to save three lines and to distribute the space to advantage. You will also observe that the Santayana quotation stands out much better in nine point than it did in ten point.

I shall send you the finished sheet as soon as one is off the press. Meanwhile, I hope you will be encouraged. Everybody at the printing office and in Massachusetts Hall itself is amazed by the depth and character of the engraving....

The printing of the broadside and the arrival in Lyme of proofs and soon of final copies did not bring the project to a close. The engraved wood block picturing Massachusetts Hall was returned to Nason, who printed an edition of 100. On October 13, Nason wrote:

I am just sending out such proofs of the Mass. Hall woodcut as have been definitely ordered, and am enclosing with yours the proof of the pump – inscribed to Primus.

I printed the cut on different kinds of paper and they range from almost white to the deep tone of the one I am sending you, which I think imparts a bit more atmosphere although it is not as brilliant as those on the white. But there are only a few on this paper, which being Japan, is scarce and I have only a small amount left.

The mats are not what I usually get; they are really watercolor mats. But it seems to be hard to get anything exactly right these days, and these don't look too badly....

Primus continues to be the signature of the column "The College Pump," founded by David McCord (Primus I) and, as this is written, signed in the current issues of the *Harvard Magazine* by Primus IV. The arrival of the proofs brought a letter of October 21, 1943, from McCord, with comment on the wood engraving of Massachusetts Hall:

...I am amazed at the clarity of light through the trees and on the east end of the building. I suppose you must wipe the block to achieve such a result. I wish I could watch the operation.

Nason replied on October 27, after discussion of a forthcoming advertisement in the *Bulletin* of the sale of signed proofs of Massachusetts Hall:

No, there isn't any wiping of the block in this printing. It is just straight printing, with considerable overlaying and the use of stiff strong ink, but principally it represents the difference between the hand press and the machine.

In correspondence which continued until 1966, there is much more that might find a place in these pages. Letters of 1943 just quoted can symbolize the series of later projects, almost all of them commissions from Harvard, on which the two men collaborated. Two very specific sets of instructions from Nason should be recorded here for their highly personal knowledge of what can happen, for good or bad, to an engraved block in the printing. The first is from a letter of 1944 discussing a wood engraving of Harvard Hall, the second from a letter written a decade later when Nason had just engraved a view of the doorway of Fay House, Radcliffe, as frontispiece for a new edition of David McCord's brief history of Radcliffe College.

From Thomas Nason, August 31, 1944:

Herewith a couple of proofs in the completed state. I'm sending the block itself separately special del.

I hope it will please you, although it isn't as interesting a subject as the one I did last year. But it should be a good typographical accompaniment to your broadside.

The printer will have to do considerable overlaying so that the brick wall on the right and lower portion, in the foreground, will come out strong while the further objects will be less strong. And the sky must be light and clean. If he uses as little ink as possible without actually letting it come grey, and plenty of punch, I think it will print all right.

In these proofs I overlaid and also underlaid the block – the lower part. I took some pains to get a really good proof so that you would know how it ought to look.

I'll send you a proof on Japan paper (I have a few scraps left).

This paper on which these two proofs are printed is some that you sent me last year. Something easier to print on would be better.

The electro should be made without any "rolling up" so that the printing surface will *not* be flat. That is, some of the area in the sky is really below the surface in order that it will not be inked too heavily and will also receive less pressure. The electro-typers like to make them *flat* unless instructed to the contrary.

From Thomas Nason, October 19, 1954:

I've just returned from a couple of weeks in Maine and Vermont to find your letter regarding the block. I am sending it to you today, as there is certainly no reason why

the printer shouldn't try printing from it, or an electro, but I am very doubtful if he can get a proof like those I sent you. Mine were printed on a hand press and the block inked very carefully by hand, which is the most vital part of the process, particularly in this case because of the delicacy of the texture on the door.

The machine press is inked automatically and the rollers are much smaller than mine and they sink in and fill up the light parts, producing a muddy effect. Anyhow, this is what usually happens.

By far the best reproductions of my work have been done by an offset process. They make the plate from a good proof, which I supply, and don't use the block itself....

If I am making an engraving which I know is to be printed direct on a machine press, then I try to engrave the block in such a way that the machine can handle it. But in the present case, with that white door, I had to resort to such treatment as would produce the right effect when printed by hand....

The letters contain occasional remarks on landscape. A few are quoted to end these selections from the correspondence.

From Thomas Nason, December 20, 1954:

I am enclosing a proof of a wood engraving which I made last summer for the Associated American Artists, a Vermont scene based on a sketch of the place we have stayed a numbers of times with friends in North Pomfret. It's at the end of a very rough and narrow road – hardly a road, and seclusion ought to be the title, though in the catalogue it is called *Midsummer*....

From David McCord, 22 December 1954:

I cannot lose a moment to thank you with all my heart for this perfectly beautiful proof of the Vermont wood engraving. My continuing love for that perfect state has given me a thousand pictures in the mind: particularly of the high and bare-crowned hills with the yellow grass and the grove of maples from which a tree or two has somehow strayed.

From David McCord, 23 March 1956, commenting on the same print:

...Nothing that I possess gives me more pleasure than that. It stands on my book shelf just opposite my desk and just under the water color of New Zealand which Charles Hopkinson gave me....

You speak of color: it is continually amazing to me how you manage to produce the effect of color in black and white. There is just as much color in your Vermont hillside as there is in the Hopkinson water color.

521 *Midsummer*

Hebron Barns, pencil drawing on tissue, actual size. See No. 274, pp. 113–115.

FIFTY PRINTS

BY PAUL SWENSON

THE brief commentaries which follow begin with a Nason woodcut of 1921 and conclude with a wood engraving of 1964. Limited to fifty prints, they are presented in chronological order; each is accompanied by a small reproduction which provides visual identification and reference to a larger reproduction earlier in this book, in the comprehensive catalogue of Nason's prints.

No two people will see an artist's work in exactly the same way, and each observer will differ in the pleasures discovered and observations made. The present volume brings together a number of different viewpoints, and readers exploring Nason's work in these pages will add their own points of view.

Paul Swenson's commentaries on fifty prints have the specific aim of presenting, in brief, a survey of Nason's printmaking and a consideration of the values inherent in the prints themselves, chosen from beginning to end of the artist's working life in the graphic arts. Almost all of the prints in the selection were published by Nason for general sale; many of them can be found in public collections, and many appear from time to time in the hands of printsellers and collectors. The pleasures of careful examination and consideration reflected here and in other essays are pleasures shared especially with collectors who may annotate the selection and add to it other personal choices.

S. H. H.

Boston Public Garden (1921)
After several tentative, experimental efforts, Nason published his 1921 woodcut of the Boston Public Garden. It is a work full of vitality and notable for its use of such features as the famous foot bridge designed by W. G. Preston, carefully placed tree masses and the tower of the Arlington Street Church. The tower is represented in a most simplified manner, creating a strong design element against a sky done with a pattern of diagonal lines. An impression of late afternoon is expressed in this block.

Massachusetts General Hospital (1923)
The Bulfinch building of the Massachusetts General Hospital is shown in an abbreviated way. We see only the central part of the building with its Ionic portico and dome. Trees to the left add interest to the subject.

Courtyard, Beacon Hill (1924)
Here is found a further refinement of Nason's linework and his choice of the motif itself. The tonalities and atmospheric effect are handled with a mastery excelling the artist's similar efforts up to this time.

In New Hampshire (1925)
This print signaled the recognition of Nason as a printmaker on a professional basis, and it received a number of important print awards. Here he employs a variety of methods to suggest leafy foliage in the trees seen in the foreground and in the middle distance. His visual expression is one of realism within the bounds of great respect for the wood block and the engraver's tools. The effect of distance and atmosphere is achieved by indirect means, a counterpoint of contrasting textural patterns instead of the careful, meticulous style which Nason was to use later.

Church of the Advent (1925)
A well known Boston subject is depicted by an approach to

engraving which leaves comparatively few black areas and middle tones. These appear only in the most crucial places. The sky area has been cut away almost entirely, creating an effect of radiant afternoon sunlight. This is reflected by the upper part of the church which is shown by a combination of thin lines and tiny textural dots.

Old Boston Houses (1925)
The scene conveys much of the austere, somewhat dingy, unrestored flavor of the Beacon Hill area as it was during the early Nineteen Twenties when the Nasons lived there. The scene today, with figures attracted to the windows of antique shops, is in some ways much the same.

House in Digby, Nova Scotia (1926)
One of Nason's largest blocks up to this time shows an old house with weathered shingles, providing an opportunity for the artist to produce an image which is both realistic and at the same time quite abstract. The foliage of the gnarled trees is represented with a variety of flicks and dotted patterns which add richness and interest to the overall feeling of the block.

The Blacksmith's Shop (1926)
Here is a severity which recalls some of Charles Burchfield's work. The sombre tonality typical of a number of Nason's skies is found here probably for the first time and will become a feature which will appear often as his style develops.

Houses on Beacon Hill (1926)
A small print done with the simplest, most elemental technical means, gives an authentic feeling of the picturesque early nineteenth century houses of Beacon Hill with a hint of mystery and of a remote, forgotten past then little studied by architectural scholars.

Autumn Foliage (1927)
A work which in some respects recalls the earlier print entitled *In New Hampshire*. A tapestry-like effect is produced by the style of cutting. Color is strongly intimated and the large tree to the left almost seems to glow with leaves catching the brilliant autumnal light.

Nova Scotia Landscape (1927)
The influence of Gordon Graig is evident in this print, but there is a concept of design and deep spiritual feeling for the scene that is Nason's own. The open handling of the foreground is admirably realized and the eye is led easily into the fields beyond to the range of dark trees standing against a large luminous cloud formation. The poetry and technical discipline of the later Nason are foreshadowed here.

Winter Afternoon (1927)
A bleak cityscape which reminds one to some extent of the earlier *Blacksmith's Shop*. A row of old commercial buildings of varying types are seen under a wintry sky. There is a typical Boston intimation of chilly dampness and a suggestion of an impending snow storm.

On the Maine Coast (1927)
Here is one of Nason's most abstract designs. Forms are seen as flat patterns which are engraved in a number of interesting and appropriate kinds of linework. The artist's growing interest in coastal subjects is reflected in this print.

T.W.N. (1927)
An example of Nason's great skill and perfection of technique. It is also characteristic of a number of his smaller works which reveal an inventiveness and appropriateness in matters of basic design and good taste.

Back of Beacon Hill (1928)
Nason's print shows very clearly the influence of Edward Gordon Craig. Comparison may be made with plate 46, *View of Arcetri*, in Craig's book *Woodcuts and Some Words*. The sky is suggested by cutting away the entire area with the exception of a thin line indicating cloud formations. Patterns of the foliage and to some extent the surfaces of the buildings are treated in a manner similar to Craig's.

Lyme Farm (1929)
The bleak desolation shown here is reminiscent of the settings of a number of novels and short stories by an earlier generation of New England writers who sought inspiration in certain aspects of local color. A horizontal emphasis to the scene contributes much power to this block. It retains the simple emphasis on design which was later to give way to complex composition and technique.

Louisburg Square (1930)
The Pinckney Street side of Louisburg Square forms the backdrop of a scene which, though it shows only a small corner of the iron-fenced enclosure, reflects the essential feeling of this famous Boston place. The fence and the statue of Columbus are seen along with an angular old tree. Together they form strong design elements adding interest and contrasting with the regularity of the tall bow front houses in the background.

The Old Manse, Concord (1931)
Instead of a conventional representation of the building itself, the character of the Old Manse with its brooding, mysterious spirit, apparent even in broad daylight, is strongly suggested. This is accomplished partly by a careful arrangement of trees silhouetted against a light sky, while the house itself remains dark, obscure and somewhat hidden.

A Deserted Farm (1931)
This is one of Nason's strongest works from the standpoint of abstract design. The forms are conceived as large and blocky and the lighting, particularly on the silo, does much to define its circular form.

Factory Village (1932)
Nason has used the multiple graver to great advantage in representing the simple basic form as well as the temporal aspect of the houses in the foreground. A feeling of depression-time drabness emerges from this print with unmistakable clarity.

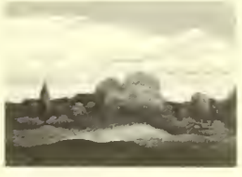
Wooded Shore (1933)
A small block which has many perfections. Nason has instinctively captured the unique lonely feeling of the sparsely populated far reaches of many miles of the Maine coast as they appeared in his time.

Cummington Bridge (1933)
Copper and a careful choice of printing paper seem to

enhance the effect of brilliant sunlighting of this scene showing an old covered bridge and its stone pier construction. Nason's handling of copper engraving bears interesting comparison with his work in wood. His deep feeling for New England subjects transcends the differences inherent in the two mediums.

Landscape With Sheep (1934)
A most tranquil pastoral which is given special interest by an unusual grouping of trees. There is a feeling not unlike that found in certain works by artists of the French Barbizon school. Like many other Nason landscapes this breaks the bounds of the wood medium and could easily become the basis of a work painted on canvas of large size.

Edge Of The Pasture (1935)
A magnificent landscape, worthy of a Claude Lorraine, nevertheless represents the spirit of Nason's time. To this observer, the turbulent sky, despite the idyllic feeling of the trees and foreground, disturbingly suggests the starkness of the depression years.



Connecticut Pastoral (1936)
Here is a simplicity and a spirit of quietude which is difficult to describe. There is nothing spectacular in the bit of New England scenery which Nason has chosen for depiction. An inner vision, however, has transformed an ordinary corner of the countryside into an image of much depth and feeling. The handling of a wide range of tonal values suggests an almost painterly approach in the use of the technique of chiaroscuro wood engraving.

On The Island (1937)
This is another of Nason's most impressive depictions of a seemingly abandoned farmhouse. Dead trees form interesting dark patterns against the sky. Unkempt lilacs seen against the house are the only sign of life.

Morning (1937)
Like several other blocks of this genre, *Morning* has a feeling of poetic repose. Nason knew how to capture the intensity of a moment in simple but most penetrating terms.

Pennsylvania Landscape (1938)
This is a superb example of Nason's ability to treat landscape with effectiveness and restraint. The results here are notable for an illusion of distance involving an awareness of appropriate scale and a natural gift for creating images which make a lasting impression on the viewer.

Stone Barn, Bucks County (1939)
A small print, yet monumental. The value contrasts are among the strongest which Nason introduced into his prints up to this time.

Trees Along The Delaware (1939)
There is a reposeful silence to this scene as observed and recorded by one with special gifts for discovering places of a poetic character.

New England Fields (1940–1941) (*first state illustrated*)
Carried out in two states, this engraving has much character and a kind of universality found in farm scenes done over the centuries. At times a feeling emerges somewhat

like that found in similarly austere subjects pictured by the French etcher Alphonse Legros in the nineteenth century. Nason by cutting down the size of the plate in the second state has made a more concentrated and intensified composition.

Eggemoggin Reach (1940)
(Commission of Associated American Artists)
Although the arrangement of the various pictorial elements found here is somewhat unconventional, a feeling of deep space is strongly implied, mainly by a series of horizontals which lead the eye backwards gradually into the distance to produce a note of convincing realism.

December Farm (1940)
A superior conception with three-dimensional areas of black and white arranged with much purpose and with a feeling that suggests the age-old solidity of the barn which stands in a dark December landscape under a threatening sky.

Deer Isle, Maine (1941)
(Commission of Associated American Artists)
A print with shimmering water reflecting a bright sky set above a tree-filled horizon, including a glimpse of a distant mountain. The atmospheric qualities realized here are among Nason's finest.

"*High Spruces*" (1945)
(Commission of R. H. Valentine)
One of Nason's most distinguished commissions. The organization of this scene has an originality which makes a memorable impression. Particularly fine is the placement of dark trees against a sky of almost elegiac beauty.

Feeding The Chickens (1945)
The ramshackle appearance of the building to the left adds a note of interest to this copper engraving. There is fine graphic representation of the materials of construction. Nason has several times devised a composition showing a series of gabled buildings set closely together.

Pearson Hall, Phillips Andover (1945)
A beautiful example of one of Bulfinch's buildings for Phillips Academy. The more important architectural features are conveyed to the viewer accurately and with subtlety. A strong sympathy is felt for a venerable structure.

The Gambrel-Roofed Barn (1947)
This is one of Nason's truly great achievements in chiaroscuro printmaking. The atmosphere which envelops the scene is typical of some of his finest work. The buildings have salient abstract features and the general effect is superb.

The Sheepfold (1947)
The multiple graver has been used in the sky to produce a special mood. There is a lace-like open quality which vibrates among the dark areas.

Amston Pond (1947)
Beautiful massing of trees and a feeling of elegance together with utmost delicacy of execution, imparting an eighteenth-century grace, are among the outstanding features

of this attractive engraving. Nason's approach to copper is far more a tonal art than one of mere line.

Farmyard, Evening(1949)
There are times when the work of Thomas Nason reminds one of the prints of Samuel Palmer and Frederick L. M. Griggs. In the second state of this work the effect of evening light is accomplished by a careful combination of three blocks, gray, brown and black.

Massachusetts Hall, Harvard (1949)
Nason has pictured Massachusetts Hall more than once. In this print the treatment of the end facade of the building which faces Massachusetts Avenue, quite fills the block, leaving an area of sky broken up by foliage and carefully placed cloud forms. Details such as the clock dial and the ornamental ironwork over the gate to the right are given careful attention and add much to the interest of the design.

Black Hall River (1951)
One of Nason's most handsome engravings on copper. It has a subtle grouping of trees which progress towards the center of the composition from the right. Like many Nason scenes, it shows a bit of landscape unspoiled by man-made incursions of any kind. Only the small boat suggests human presence.

A New England Stream (1951)
There is a majestic feeling to this print which is comparable to some of the great New England landscape painting of the nineteenth century. A single elm of graceful proportions is placed to the left against a calm summer sky. Many of Nason's prints have attributes which suggest paintings, bringing to mind the work of Benjamin Champney, Alfred T. Bricher, George Inness and other American artists of a century past.

St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia (1953)
Here is one more outstanding example of Nason's capacity to deal with architecture of varying styles. The building is accurately portrayed and the composition is one of considerable power and interest.

Maine Islands (1954)
Nason not only captured the feeling of the subject with a clear-visioned precision, but the plate is executed with a technical skill in the use of copper which rises to a height of achievement surpassing his earlier works. The artist has imparted to the spruce-blanketed islands in the middle distance a sense of mystery which captures the imagination and somehow invites the viewer's exploration of the actual places depicted.

Old Lyme Congregational Church (1956)
One of the most attractive of all early nineteenth-century New England churches, this is actually an accurate and fireproof reconstruction of the original structure of 1817 built by Samuel Belcher, which burned in 1907. Nason has provided an ingratiating setting of trees which seem to be bursting with springtime buds.

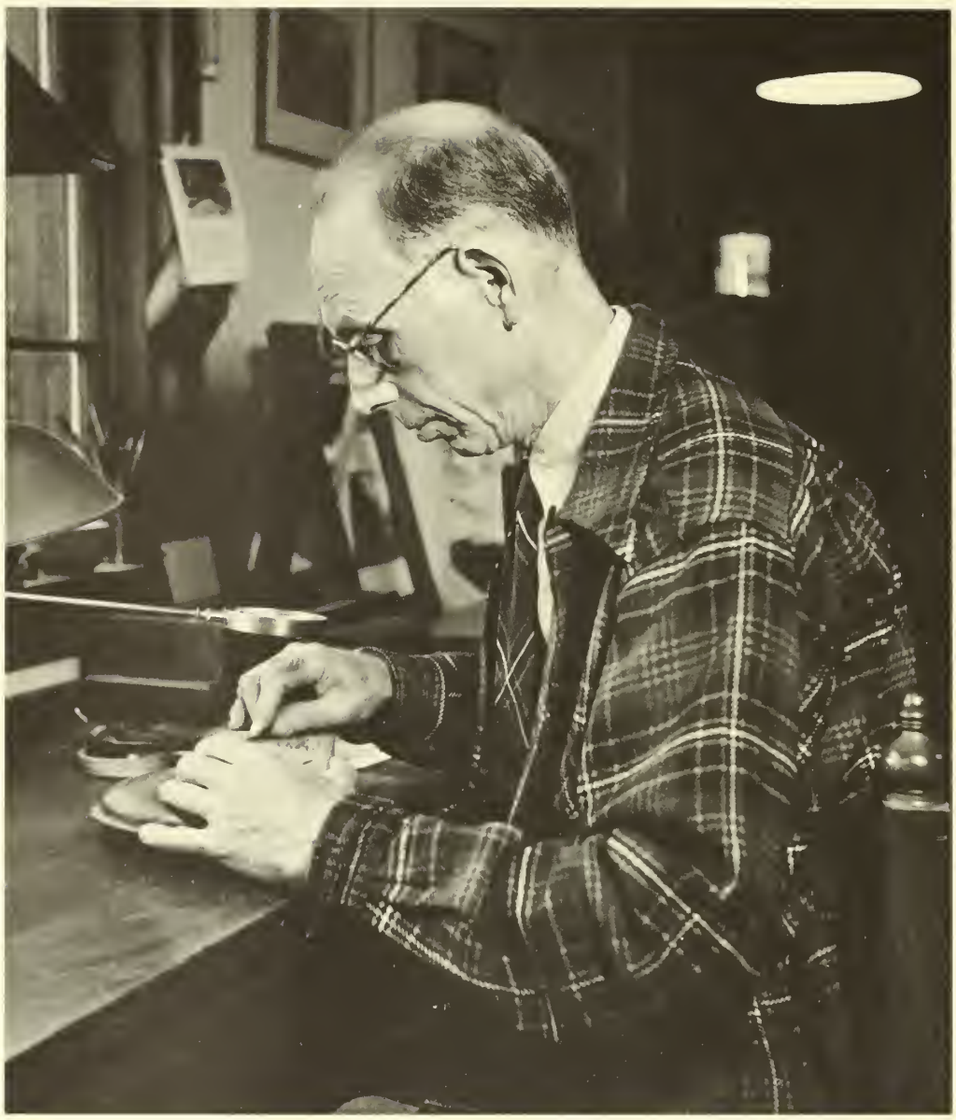
The Griswold House (1962)
A commission which Nason accomplished with much grace and skill. The house is set against a mass of foliage of varied tonalities. The darker tones to the right help set off the interesting architectural features of the building itself.

Nason gave commissioned works the same degree of thought and consideration he devoted to his most personal conceptions.

The Macauley House (1963)
A commission which involves a rather straightforward depiction of a Colonial Revival house seen in bright sunlight. It is representative of the meticulous care the artist always expended on subjects which others might have found too great a challenge.

Science Building, Haverford (1964)
A prime example of Nason's success with commissions which involved subjects very different from the old New England farm buildings which figure so prominently in many of his most important prints. From this contemporary building the artist creates a powerful abstract design derived in part from the stark character of the architecture itself.

Lieutenant River, Lyme, pen and pencil drawing, actual size. See No. 490, p. 175.



WOOD ENGRAVING

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ART AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND NOTES ON PRINTING

BY THOMAS W. NASON

"Wood engraving in the nineteenth century has no special character of its own, but on the other hand is set to imitate every kind of engraving and every kind of drawing. It is like a polyglot who has learned to speak many other languages at the risk of forgetting his own."

THUS Hamerton, writing in the Nineties, describes the low estate to which the oldest of all the graphic arts had fallen only a few years prior to its present widespread revival among artists as a medium for original expression. For nearly five hundred years wood engraving existed almost entirely as a reproductive medium, few artists of ability caring to do more than to make designs for craftsmen to engrave, while the peculiar charm of "its own language" was overlooked.

Probably the true origin of the art was in Asia, many centuries before it became known to western civilization, but so far as concerns its relation to present-day work in Europe and America, the history of wood engraving need not be traced beyond the early fifteenth century when the first blocks of which we have knowledge were cut in Germany. In the latter half of that century, when the printing press came into use, the demand for woodcuts increased tremendously, since they were the only known means by which illustrations or decorations for books could be printed with the type. The crudeness of execution characteristic of this very early work began then to disappear as the engravers gained in proficiency, and towards the close of the century their work reached a very high level.

Among the artists of that time whose work has come down to us in the form of woodcuts the name of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) stands out both for the monumental nature of his designs and the amazing quantity of work which he produced. Dürer made his drawings either directly on the wood block or had someone trace them onto the block and they were then engraved by another workman, the "Formschneider," who, with infinite pains and skill, cut away the surface of the block between the lines of the drawing thus leaving them in relief to receive the ink. This was the method commonly followed, and hence wood engraving in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was really a reproductive art, the wood block then occupying the place now held by the zinc process block from which prints are made from mechanically reproduced pen drawings. It is worth noting, however, that in Dürer's time, since the drawing was intended to be cut on wood, this fact probably influenced the artist in imposing upon him a restriction or economy of line resulting in boldness and simplicity – a merit often lacking in the copper engravings of the same artist, which were executed by his own hand. These latter bear eloquent witness to Dürer's marvellous craftsmanship, and it is interesting to speculate on what he might have done with his own hand had a more spontaneous and autographic method of wood engraving then been known. But since the aim of wood engraving in his day was the faithful reproduction of the artist's drawing, there was no reason why he should take the time to perform this part of the process when he could employ expert workmen to do it for him.

The height of this phase of wood engraving was reached before the sixteenth century was far advanced. The series of woodcuts designed by Holbein about 1538, known as the "Dance of Death," seems to represent the uttermost in refinement of knife-work on the wood block. It is difficult to conceive of their being engraved by this means.

Designed for the most part for use with type, these early woodcuts in their complete harmony with the printed page have never been excelled and seldom equalled. But the demand for "elegance" which was more readily achieved in copper engraving began to manifest itself in the production of books, and wood engraving went into a decline to such an extent that through the seventeenth and most of the

From *The Dance of Death*, woodcut by Hans Holbein, 1538

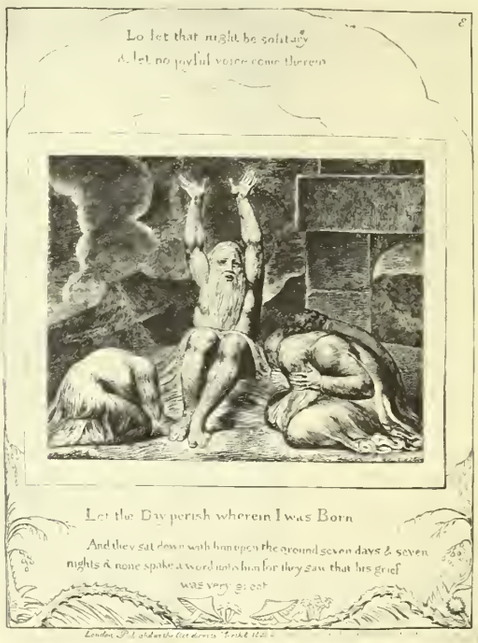
eighteenth century its use was scorned for any but the cheapest of publications.

Somewhere around the time of the American war of independence a new development or discovery was made which changed the whole situation. This was the simple fact that if the cross-section of a hardwood tree, such as box, were used in making an engraving block, so that the grain of the wood ran at right angles to the surface instead of parallel with it as had always been the case theretofore, a pointed tool similar to those in use by copper engravers could be employed with far greater ease and freedom than the knife and would cut with equal facility in any direction. This principle was responsible for a great revival in the popularity of the woodcut, which continued unabated for another hundred years. It seems almost incredible that this method had not been discovered earlier, since the principle would be instantly manifest to any woodworker who had occasion to use a gouge upon the end of a board.

The English engraver, Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), three hundred years after Dürer, was the chief exponent of this new method, although it is not claimed he invented it. He did a great deal, however, to perfect the technique and to raise wood engraving to a higher plane than it had occupied in Europe in nearly two hundred years. This was certainly no slight accomplishment even considering the extremely low state of the art prior to Bewick. His work, though matter of fact, shows that he was a close observer of nature and of rural life in his day, and his ability to draw and skill in engraving enabled him to render the objects with which he was familiar, such as birds and animals, with a remarkable degree of accuracy. He produced a quantity of work and he was, for the most part, his own designer – wherein he differed from most of those who were to follow him.

Two others whose work should be mentioned, since their wood engravings stand out as unique in their time, are William Blake and Edward Calvert. Blake was an exact contemporary of Bewick, though the similarity ends there. The former possessed a vivid imagination while Bewick was literal and prosaic; he had a powerful sense of design, which Bewick lacked. Blake's few woodcuts were strongly conceived but crudely executed while Bewick's hundreds of blocks were all turned out in a craftsmanlike manner. Blake, however, had other work in different media to pursue and doubtless his woodcuts were merely a digression. With Bewick it was a life work. Blake, incidentally, died poor, while Bewick left a comfortable sum to his family. Calvert was a young man when, a few years before Blake's death, he appears to have found his inspiration in the work of the elder artist. In the six or seven exquisitely rendered wood engravings which, unfortunately, are all that Calvert made, the influence of Blake's design can be seen, although in execution Calvert far surpassed him. In fact he had command of an almost perfect woodcut technique. His work stands alone in his time; it has all the innate quality of true wood engraving.

Bewick's followers (neither Blake nor Calvert seems to have had any), of whom not a few were trained by Bewick himself, pursued the craft with great diligence and by the middle of the nineteenth century technical skill in wood



Lo let that night be solitary, etching, 1825, by William Blake, from the collection of Thomas Nason. The reproduction is much reduced.

engraving had advanced to such an extent that no drawing was considered too elaborate for the engravers to attempt and woodcuts were everywhere the common medium of illustration. It does not seem that these men who came after Bewick were for the most part inclined to original work of their own; they were content to engrave after the designs of others. The artist drew on the block, which was then engraved line for line, the craftsman cutting away, with the graver, the untouched portions of the block, leaving the drawing in relief, just as had been done three hundred years earlier with the knife. But with what a difference! In Dürer's time, the drawing was simple and bold, strong in design and without unnecessary detail. In the sixties and seventies, however, the engravers having dem-

onstrated that there was practically no limit to the capabilities of the graver and the boxwood block, the illustrator made his drawing according to no law of wood engraving but after his own ideas and so turned it over to the engraver, whose business it then became to imitate the

The Sheep of His Pasture, copper engraving, 1828, by Edward Calvert, from the collection of Thomas Nason

drawing as closely as his skill permitted, crosshatching, intricate shading and all. As drawings, many of these illustrations which were engraved on wood are of the highest order; it was a great period in English illustration as it was in literature. But it is as drawings and not as wood engravings that we admire them today, unless we are looking purely at the craftsmanship of the engraving.

Later, in the Eighties and Nineties, especially in America, a school of tonal engravers developed. Paintings and drawings were photographed on the block and the engraver, working under a strong lens, reproduced them with astonishing minuteness, to such an extreme that with the naked eye one could hardly see the individual lines of the engraving. The late Timothy Cole was one of the leaders of this group. We have seen one of his engravings after a pencil drawing in which even the granular effect of the pencil was faithfully rendered! Without in any way disparaging the marvellous craftsmanship displayed in this type of work, it is most certainly not the true function of wood engraving. Nor can Cole be correctly termed "the last of the wood engravers," for we have today in Europe and America a host of wood engravers whose work, even though much of it probably would provoke the mirth of such as Timothy Cole and his school, is nevertheless a sincere attempt to employ the medium for its own sake, as an original and not an interpretive art.

The camera, however, which had aided this style of work, was the cause of its downfall. The invention of photomechanical processes of reproduction put an abrupt end to it and the day of the reproductive engraver was over. The woodcut disappeared from the pages of magazines and newspapers and was again almost forgotten.

Prior to this, however, and even while the mass of wood engraving, in the Nineties and at the beginning of the twentieth century, was reproductive, a few talented artists in England and France had begun to practice it in an original way, creating things of much beauty. Among these were William Nicholson, whose boldly cut designs were usually printed in two colors; Sturge Moore and the two whose names as well as whose work seem to be inseparable, Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, whose book decorations are engraved with directness and true feeling for typographical character. There was also the group which gathered round William Morris in his venture in bookmaking. Another was Gordon Craig, the stage designer and author of a highly entertaining book, *Woodcuts and Some Words*. Mr. Craig began to engrave blocks as early as 1893 and has continued in his unique and distinctly charming manner down to the present day. In France there was Auguste Lepère, who received his training as a professional wood engraver during the reproductive era but who swung into a broader and more original style in the engraving of his own compositions. Lepère was a very resourceful engraver, master of several techniques as well as an etcher. He used both the graver and the knife, producing work of widely varying character.

Another French artist who, about this time, (in the early nineteen hundreds) was engaged in creative work on the wood block was Paul Gauguin. Living on an island in the South Seas, he was dependent presumably upon such materials as were at hand and his work at times was roughly executed though highly original and boldly conceived. It has had a considerable influence upon modern wood engraving. Gauguin achieved a remarkable effect in texture, something akin to lithographic quality. His prints are large and characterized by wide areas of black decoratively set against white and a beautiful grey: this last, however, resulting apparently from the use of an additional block, since in some of his prints a red or yellow takes the place of the grey. It is understood that those with the grey tone were printed later by Gauguin's son in Paris. If this is so, then a great improvement was made over the original impressions from the same blocks supposed to have been printed by Gauguin himself in Tahiti.

These men, it might be said, formed a connecting link between the work of the past and the present revival of wood engraving, which, beginning in earnest soon after the world war, has steadily gained in favor among artists of nearly all nations.

Thus we see that the popularity of wood engraving as the handmaiden of art during five hundred years has twice waxed and waned, sinking into disuse and oblivion only to shine again with a brighter light. The first period lasted nearly two hundred years and the decline was gradual, coincident with the decline of printing from its early high artistic standard and with the growing use of the copper plate. Its second period of great popular usage (the nineteenth century) came to a sudden end with the invention of our modern mechanical processes of reproduction. And

The Deserted Village, wood engraving by Thomas Bewick, from the collection of Thomas Nason

now once more it has, within a comparatively short space of time, reappeared on a higher plane and is today taking its place with etching and other graphic media in which original work is done. It would almost seem that wood engraving had been waiting to be relieved from the stigma of a reproductive art in order to come finally into its own.

Without doubt the craft has suffered in its modern development from an over-zealousness to get away from the technique characteristic of the reproductive era of the nineteenth century. The pendulum has frequently swung too far. In all the graphic media craftsmanship must play an important part and wood engraving is no exception. There is no intrinsic value in crudity itself. The modern wood engraver must be a skillful workman as well as a creative artist if he is to exploit the medium to its fullest extent and produce things of lasting merit.

Until very recently hardly any treatise could be found dealing with the technique of wood engraving in a modern sense. There was, of course, Chatto and Jackson's ponderous work, published in the nineteenth century, but this book, while it contains many valuable hints, is in no way related to the spirit of the modern art and has much that is irrelevant to it. In former years the technique of reproductive wood engraving was learned as a trade and so thoroughly were the craftsmen trained in a certain style that we read of large blocks which were wanted in a hurry being divided and the separate portions handed out to as many engravers. After each piece was engraved the block was joined together and printed as one. Today all is different; no one learns the craft in such a manner and we can with difficulty imagine the result were a block broken up and given over to several different persons to engrave, each in his own highly personal style. The artist is now free to choose his own manner of working and eventually develops a style which best suits his particular approach.

The technique of wood engraving is simple and direct, involving no complicated procedure. After the preliminary drawing the work is all done on the block by the hand of the engraver; no acids or other processes intervene between this and the final work of printing. It is all straight tool work. Yet the wood block is capable of yielding an extraordinarily wide variety of effects, which perhaps accounts for the existence of a certain amount of confusion as to the actual process.

A distinction is usually made between the terms "wood engraving" and "woodcut," although the latter comes most easily to the tongue and is used pretty generally in reference to either. To be specific, a *woodcut* is commonly taken to be a print from a block on which the design has been cut with a knife held vertically and drawn towards the engraver, or with gouges of varying sizes, or with both. The block for this purpose can be of any close-grained wood and the grain runs longitudinally as in any ordinary piece of limber, hence the expression "to cut on the plank." Linoleum is sometimes employed in like manner. The design is drawn or traced upon the block and the untouched parts of the surface are lowered with knife and gouge sufficiently to leave the drawn lines or solid masses of the design in relief. Theoretically this is the woodcutter's practice. It is the older method, the one used in the time of Dürer as

Sleeping Shepherd, etching by Samuel Palmer, 1857, from the collection of Thomas Nason

has already been noted. Practically, however, since today the artist is his own engraver, innovations in cutting appear. One need not adhere meticulously to his own drawing but may let the tool indicate something. Hence we frequently see "woodcuts" obviously done on the plank or on linoleum in which the character of a pen or brush drawing is less evident than that of gouge-work. Broad masses of black are interspersed with white lines to indicate contours or outlines much as would be done with the graver, but with a coarser effect.

The method more widely employed is what can truly be termed wood engraving. The tool for this is the graver (or burin), with variations in size and shape, some of which are known as "spit-stickers," "tint-tools" and "scorpers." These are held nearly flat on the block while the cutting is accomplished by the forward movement of the point, which plows out a clean furrow of wood. The width of this furrow varies according to the tool used and the depth of the line. It is totally unlike the action of the knife, has more flexibility and far greater range and tends to give the engraving a quality of its own quite apart from that of a pen drawing, unless, of course, the pen drawing was made to imitate a wood engraving.

For this type of work the block must be what is called "end-grain"; that is, a cross-section of wood, preferably box. Maple is a fair substitute and much cheaper, but it lacks the denseness and smoothness of cutting characteristic of box. The best boxwood comes from Turkey or thereabouts. The logs, perhaps half a foot in diameter, are sawn into rough blocks and thoroughly seasoned. As cracks occur during this interval, it is impossible to obtain large sections for engraving, so the clear pieces are glued together to form a fair-sized block. This is planed down and finished type-high (about ⅞ inch) so that it can be printed with ordinary type if required. The surface is rendered extremely smooth, almost like polished ivory.

The term "white-line engraving" is often spoken of as distinct from "black-line engraving." To some extent this is true, in that a pure white-line engraving renders the design in terms of white against a black ground, the opposite of black-line work, such as a pen drawing. If an untouched block is inked and an impression taken from it, the result is of course merely a solid black mass. Considering the block, then, as a black ground, we may with a few simple thrusts of the graver create a design thereon which will print white on a black area; in other words the furrows plowed out with the tool are the only interruption in the solidity of the mass. This is the simplest form of engraving and it is capable of beautiful results with a minimum of work. In general, however, for the fullest exploitation of the medium, a combination of white and black line is necessary, as a rigid adherence to the former tends to limit the artist in range and leaves the work in a rather negative state. Conceived on the white-line principle, the engraving as it proceeds retains this characteristic less obviously, until the point is reached where white and black lines are so worked together that, in the ultimate result, we are conscious not so much of these technicalities as of the work as a whole and the effect it produces, regardless of the methods employed in bringing this about.

This white-line principle is not entirely a later development. In some of the Venetian and Florentine woodcuts of the fifteenth century considerable use was made of it, and even a closer kinship to our present-day white line work exists in the metal cuts of that time, the technique of which bears a strong resemblance to that of the hard end-grain block and the graver. These metal cuts (which are not to be confused with line engravings or etchings) were rendered in the true white line principle and printed as were woodcuts. They were relief cuts. In them considerable use was made of the *criblé* method of rendering texture or suggesting tones by closely worked areas of dots punched into the metal, which came out as white dots in the print. In a modern wood engraving, instead of being punched in, each "dot" is lifted out cleanly with the point of the tool. Probably the slowness of execution and difficulty of lowering large spaces sufficiently to produce corresponding areas of pure white were elements limiting the use of metal cuts, which seem not to have survived beyond the fifteenth century.

The Herdsman's Cottage; or, Sunset, etching by Samuel Palmer, 1850, from the collection of Thomas Nason

In wood cutting (as distinct from engraving) a V-shaped gouge is frequently used, and this is pushed forward much in the same manner as the graver and with a similar result: that is, it also plows a furrow with one operation. Thus "white line" work can be done on the plank and is really engraving, as in a broad sense it all is. The final result is the creation of a printing surface of the same general character in both cases: the ink adheres only to the untouched surface of the block and hence it is this which causes the impression on the paper.

Wood engraving, as we have seen, permits of a considerable amount of freedom in the use of the graver and in many cases successful results can be attained with very little preliminary drawing on the block. But it is easy to lose values and details of the original conception during the work of engraving and it is therefore safer to have the composition sufficiently worked out on paper before doing anything whatever with the block. This does not mean that in the drawing as it is finally made on the block itself each line is indicated as it is intended to appear in the print. In general only the main outlines, forms and masses need be set down and the business of rendering these in terms of engraving is left to the tool and the ingenuity of the person behind it. Details where the accuracy of the drawing is required to be preserved must, of course, be more carefully followed. Portions intended to print as flat black masses are left without a touch of the graver. Grey is achieved in varying degrees by the use of a tool cutting a line of uniform width, gradations being produced by widening these lines or the spaces between them. An even grey requires a steady hand and is by no means the easiest feature of the work. Various textures can be rendered by short flicks with the point of the tool or by crossing the white lines and in numerous other ways.

Mistakes cannot easily be rectified. There is no erasing. Once the wood is removed, a line cut, it is impossible to replace it. Very small corrections can be made by boring a hole in the block and filling this with a plug of the same kind of wood, which must be carefully levelled and rendered smooth to correspond with the adjacent surface, but this is a slow process and one to be avoided if possible.

Thus wood engraving is of necessity a deliberate art, and nothing is gained by haste. This is especially true when the work is in its final stage, at which point a false step may in a trice ruin the whole thing. All this, however, is an argument in favor of wood engraving, since one does not undertake the considerable work involved in engraving a composition unless he feels that it is a good one and worthy of the labor. It is not on wood that one is likely to proceed lightly with whatever fancy may at the moment dictate.

The printing of a woodblock presents a much simpler problem than that of a copper plate and requires less time. The technique used in the engraving plays an important part in determining whether the printing will be easy or difficult. A block engraved with delicacy and at the same time containing large dark areas will give more trouble than one engraved in simple open line, because in the former the fine lines will tend to fill up when sufficient ink is used to achieve the required density of black in the solid portions. If one's block is intended to be used for commercial purposes or to be printed with type this fact should be borne in mind and the engraving so made that it can be printed satisfactorily in an automatic power press. If, however, the engraver expects to print the required number of proofs on a hand press he may overcome these difficulties by careful inking and distribution of pressure and so be free to engrave the block in whatever manner he deems best.

By rolling a thin film of ink over the block, laying a sheet of tissue paper upon it and rubbing this with a flat object such as the handle of a teaspoon, one may obtain a satisfactory trial proof, but for the printing of an edition and for best results generally a hand proof press is required.

At the proof press

The illustration shows the press commonly described as the Washington proof press. The pressure is exerted by the horizontal action of the hand lever, causing a direct downward movement of the heavy platen. The platen is supported by springs which raise it immediately the pressure is released. Before the invention of power presses all printing was done with presses more or less similar to this. They are still to be found in printers' shops, where they are used for the taking of proofs.

To obtain an impression from the wood block a small quantity of printer's ink is placed on a marble slab and distributed evenly with a roller. This ink is quite stiff and considerable rolling is required to work it out thinly. The bed of the press is rolled out, the block being placed in the center and wedged in tightly. The roller, charged with ink, is then passed lightly but firmly across the face of the block several times, a sheet of proof paper laid upon it, then a few sheets of paper upon this to form a "blanket," the bed rolled under the platen and the lever pulled over. In case a trial proof only is required, this will be sufficient and will show the work and what remains to be done on the block. By rubbing white powder into the lines the engraver may easily see the extent of his work.

Now considering the block finished, or practically so, an edition of fifty to a hundred impressions is desired. A few proofs are pulled as described, upon thin paper, to be used in "making ready," as will be explained below. These will undoubtedly indicate that the lighter portions of the block are receiving too much pressure and the heavier areas perhaps not enough. There may also be weak spots in the proof due to unevenness in the surface or thickness of the block.

Over the tympan of the press there has been stretched a large sheet of paper, securely attached at the edges, and between this and the tympan several other sheets are slipped. The block is again inked and the tympan brought down upon it, but without laying a sheet on the block. Thus the impression this time will be directly on the paper covering the tympan and will register the exact spot where each impression will take place. From the proofs already pulled pieces are cut out and pasted onto the corresponding area on the tympan paper, thus building it up to the degree required for the proper distribution of pressure. Over all this a large sheet of heavy paper is then drawn and securely fastened down. Some of the sheets first slipped in behind the tympan paper are then removed in order not to have too thick a blanket.

During this process it is necessary to prove the cut on the paper which is to be used for the edition. This may be a good quality hand-made rag paper or Japanese. The latter is the easiest to print on and in certain cases yields the more beautiful effect but it is easily damaged afterwards and rather difficult to handle, especially when damp. Experiments will determine the paper which for the particular block is deemed best. The paper is dampened and kept under pressure until the moisture is equally distributed through every sheet. This softens the fiber and renders the paper more receptive to the ink. Less is required than with dry paper, and the less ink used, provided it be sufficient to print solidly, the better will be the impression when heavy pressure is exerted.

Since the lines sink quite readily into the dampened paper it may be found necessary to overlay still more. When the proofs on the damp paper are finally satisfactory all is ready to go ahead with the printing and it is then mainly a matter of keeping the ink uniform. Supplementing, or sometimes in place of, overlaying on the tympan, the use of "underlays" may be resorted to. This is merely a bit of paper pasted to the *back* of the block in order to render that part of the block higher and consequently susceptible to greater pressure. It is effective where large areas demand increased pressure.

Woodcuts may also be printed in a roller press similar to that used for the printing of etchings and engravings on copper and it is possible to obtain greater pressure with less physical effort than with the Washington press, though the operation is slower.

WRITTEN ABOUT 1935

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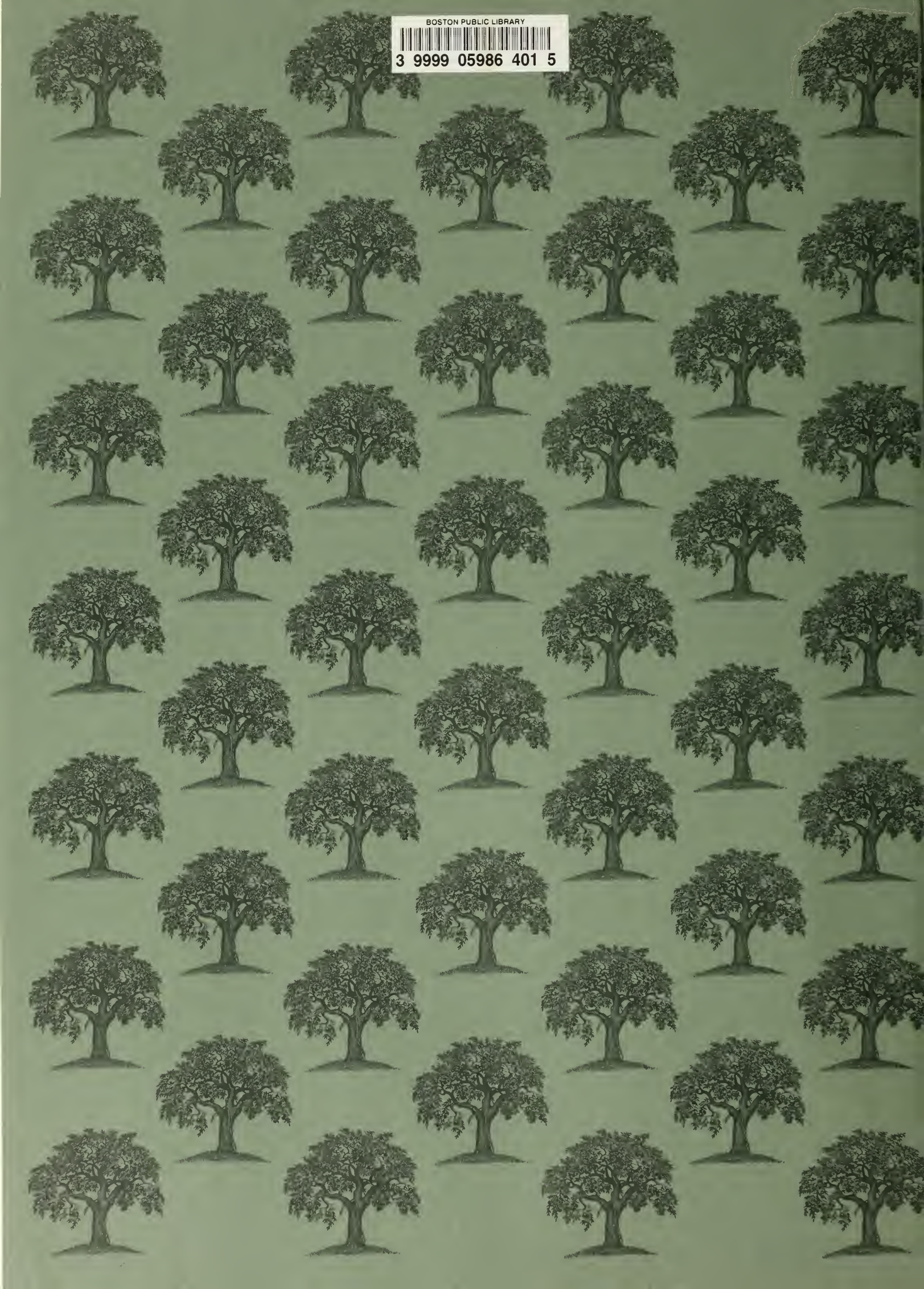

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